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ADELAIDE DE SANCERRE.

LETTERS

OF

ADELAIDE DE SANCERRE.

TO

COUNT DE NANCE.

Devoting
All to love, each was to each a dearer self;
Supremely happy in th' awakened power,
Of giving joy.

NEWBERN, N. C.

1801.

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LETTERS

OF

ADELAIDE

DE

SANCERRE.

LETTER I.

PARIS, Monday 2d Nov. 17—.

I WAS waiting for your anſwer with impatience; I thought it would announce to me a happy change in the diſpoſition of that good kinſman who ſhews ſo much politeneſs and obſtinacy in his endeavour to ruin your ſiſter. I am much irritated againſt him, my dear Count. This diſagreeable diſcuſſion of intereſt has cauſed you to paſs the fall in Brittany, and will perhaps detain you there all winter. You owe advice to your ſiſter, care and aſſiſtance to your nephews. The ſacrifice of your time, of your pleaſures, is truly generous; I approve of it; but I ſhall not ſee you. I repeat this to myſelf with much regret, with much chagrin. Never did I more ardently wiſh for you; you will aſk me why; I do not know. I am without buſineſs, without embarraſſment, at leaſt in appearance: Yet you may be neceſſary to me; I feel it. Alas! when can a friend be uſeleſs?

Monſieur de Montalais is at laſt reſtored to his friends, who anxiouſly wiſhed his return. Monſieur and Madame de Comminges, Count de Piennes and Madame de Martigues, are celebrating his arrival with fetes. He deſerves, I believe, all the ſentiments he inſpires. Adieu, my tender compliments to your amiable ſiſter. She ought to be well pleaſed with me. I deprive myſelf of the pleaſure of writing to her, not to diſturb her gentle indolence.

LETTER II.

I AM going to entruſt you with a ſmall ſecret; it gives birth to great hopes. Monſ. de Meri, ſo determined to marry Madame de Mirande to his inſipid ward, begins to forget his former prejudices. The friends of Count Termes ſurround the good old man, and aſk him whether he intends always to afflict his dear niece. They flatter, they preſs him. Chevalier de Termes ſees, amuſes, pleaſes him. Every thing ſeems combined to gratify the wiſhes of theſe two amiable perſons. Madame de Martigues takes great pains. Count de Piennes is very induſtrious. Termes goes, comes back, runs, trembles, hopes, deſpairs, laughs and cries, twenty times in the day. A true friend and tender lover, he intereſts every one in his happineſs. My attachment for Madame de Mirande fixes my attention on an event on which her fortune and happineſs depend.

The proſpect of this marriage gives much joy to Count de Piennes. "If one of theſe charming widows," ſays he, "ſubmitted again to the yoke, the other two would follow her example. Madame de Martigues would at laſt determine on it. I ſhould obtain her heart and her hand." The gratification of Piennes would be a true one for all his friends. If Madame de Martigues liſtened to my advice, ſhe

would marry him: He would be happy. But for me to reſume new ties! my friend, I never was leſs inclined to think of it.

The Marquis de Montalais is arrived; did I tell you? Have you heard from Madame de Lugei? I am going to ſurpriſe you. We are at variance with each other; yes, abſolutely at variance. I do not know why that lady ſhould pretend to regulate my conduct, and chooſe my friends. Fatigued with her leſſons, I have ceaſed to go and tire myſelf at her ſad dinners. I am willing you ſhould ſcold me a little, my dear Count, but do not become the arbiter of our quarrel; and above all, undertake not to bring us together. Adieu. I have executed your requeſts.

LETTER III.

YES, I ſee the Marquis de Montalais often. I ſup almoſt every evening in company with him. Good God! You are right. This man is an enchanter. He amuſes, charms, intereſts. He has revived the pleaſures of our ſociety. He makes the joy of it. Sought after, preferred, careſſed, he retains that modeſty, which ſo eminently diſtinguiſhes him; a rare quality in an amiable man; yes rare, and perhaps dangerous.

Madame de Martigues cannot imagine how ſhe could live ſix months without ſeeing Montalais. She liſtens to, admires, and applauds the leaſt thing he ſays. She wiſhes every one to be charmed with him, and ſeriouſly ſcolds when any perſon dares to think differently. Count de Piennes ſees like her, talks like her. The moſt ſmiling reception, a thouſand praiſes beſtowed on the Marquis, do not give a moment's uneaſineſs to an unfortunate and jealous lover. Is not this ſingular, ſurprising?

The perſon of whom you ſpeak with ſo much warmth, is quite unknown to me. I did not know that my mother had a kinſwoman married in Brittany, and without doubt ſhe herſelf did not know it. If Madame de Kerlanes is of the family of Eſtelan, (a family which is dear to me on every account) I am ready to comply with your wiſhes; and if 2,000 guineas can facilitate the eſtabliſhment of Mademoiſelle de Kerlanes, I conſent with all my heart to give them.

But what a ſtory have you heard! Nothing is more untrue. I do not poſſeſs the property of the family of Eſtelan; it had paſſed into the hands of ſtrangers long before my birth. Indeed the laſt Count of this name left me the riches he brought from Martinique; but the Marſhal de Tende did not *persuade* him to name me his univerſal legatee; the large eſtate of Monſ. d'Eſtelan was not the cauſe of my union with the nephew of the Marſhal; this kind relation intended me for Monſ. de Sancerre, when my fortune was very moderate, and I did not expect this brilliant addition. I owe an entire juſtification to the memory of Marſhal de Tende. His generous friendſhip induced him to wiſh me his niece. He deſired my happineſs, and thought to render it certain. The ill ſucceſs of his endeavours has not weakened my gratitude. I ſhall always recollect with pain and regret that it has not been in my power to prove it to him.

Undeceive Madame de Kerlanes, undeceive her, I pray you. The brother of my mother voluntarily left me his eſtate. I will inform you of the reaſons he had for diſinheriting his ſon. No, I aſſure you he never was *persuaded* by any one to ſubſcribe this deed of vengeance, juſt in his own view, raſh in mine. As a relation of Madame de Kerlanes, I believe I owe her nothing; but as a perſon more favoured by fortune than ſhe, I believe I owe her aſſiſtance, and

it will give me pleaſure to oblige her. Madame de Mariadek might ſpare her preſſing ſolicitations. Want is, with me, the ſtrongeſt recommendation. I thought the ſiſter of Count Nance knew me well enough to think ſo.

Madame de Mirande is going out; ſhe begs me to thank you for your kind wiſhes. Her hopes increaſe every moment. Madame de Themines comes in. Here ſhe is, beautiful, lively, charming; ſhe wiſhes to tell you a thouſand things; ſhe is writing them. I will put her gazette in my letter. Adieu, my friend; I am ſad; I know not why. Monſ. de Montalais is at Verſailles. I had it not in my power to comply with your wiſhes relating to him.

LETTER IV.

AH! you had juſt received a letter from Madame de Lugei when you wrote to me. The politeneſs of your expreſſions cannot hide the ſpirit which dictated them to you, nor efface the aſperity of my ſevere kinſwoman. I deſpiſe that ſort of prudence of which ſhe boaſts ſo much. I begin by telling it to you. I think every kind of affectation odious. But I wiſh to anſwer your obſervations as if the Marchioneſs de Lugei had not engaged you to communicate hers.

You are right in blaming the levity of my friend. Exact in her principles, inconſiderate in her conduct, Madame de Martigues is too regardleſs of the good opinion of others. She diſdains all conſtraint for the purpoſe of avoiding any malignant interpretations of her words, or any falſe conjectures which her ſteps may ſometimes ſeem to authoriſe. Her ideas are often foolish; ſhe is too lively; too poſitive

in doing precisely what pleases and amuses her. For example, her fancy to prove Count de Tiennes continues entirely too long. A marriage announced, delayed, broken off, quarrels, and reconciliations; a lover dismissed, recalled, admitted and rejected, ten times within two years. And yet this lover remains attached to her, and accommodates himself to all her caprices. Madame de Lugei putting the unpleasant question, wonders how a man who is ill treated can have so much patience? She admires him for this virtue, when in fact it does not belong to him. He is incessantly complaining, continually embarrassing the friends of Madame de Martigues, calling upon every one to intreat her for him, and is perhaps by his importunities at a greater distance from the gratification of his wishes, than he might be otherwise.

Indeed my dear Count, it would be doing a cruel injustice to Madame de Martigues to suspect her of the smallest weakness. Satisfied with the approbation of her own heart, the respect of her lover, the esteem of her friends, she can easily content herself, notwithstanding the *doubts*, the *fears* and *inquietudes* which have arisen in the mind of Madame de Lugei. This woman, full of apprehensions, would attract, would engross every thing. The heedlessness of Madame de Martigues, she says, wounds her; no, it is not this; it is the envy she feels at seeing her surrounded with that numerous circle of acquaintances whom her amiable temper and the charms of her conversation constantly invite to her house. Some person is coming to interrupt me; it is she; it is this *dangerous* companion, the object of my *preference*. We are going out together. I will finish my letter after supper.

[*Midnight.*

My dear Count, that I may not be obliged to return to so disagreeable a subject, I will exhaust it, and will repeat to you what I have a hundred times

told ... de Lugei. The opinion of others shall never govern my sentiments. My heart is my supreme judge. If Madame de Martigues had the misfortune to be suspected, I should grieve, I should be truly distressed; nothing could console me; but I would not cease to visit my friend constantly; I would rather run the risque of sharing an unjust censure, than assist by remaining aloof, to credit or extend it.

It would not be the first time that, sacrificing my own interest to my principles, I should see myself the object of the false ideas of that part of the world whose attention is ever fixed with jaundiced eye on the actions of others. How many idle spectators are always ready to pronounce presumptuously upon what they see, often more presumptuously upon what they do not know!

At the time when every one was against me, when I passed at court, and in the city, for a proud woman, of a difficult temper, always sad, always enveloped in a shade of ill humour; when they thought me capricious, haughty, incapable of living with the most *indulgent* husband by whom I was *cherished* and *adored*, Madame de Martigues was the only person who judged me favourably. Her friendship rendered her penetrating; she discovered qualities which without knowing me, they dared to deny me. Often did she come to partake of my solitude; she quitted, for my sake, the world which she loved; she brought me friends; she assured all hers, that I suffered distress which my sentiments of propriety forbad me to reveal. She induced Madame de Mirande to come and reside with me; she defended, with spirit, my mind, my heart and my character. And shall I act with less generosity towards her? No assuredly; but I have not the occasion to prove to her my gratitude by a return of the like kindness; thank God, I never shall: excepting Madame de Lugei, no one pretends to form injurious doubts re-

ſpecting the conduct of Madame de Martigues, and I can look on my friend with a pleaſure unembittered by any ſorrowful apprehenſions.

M. Montalais returns to-morrow; he will ſup with us. I ſhall ſpeak to him of your friend; as the Marquis is very obliging, I am ſure to ſucceed in my negotiation. You aſk me what he ſays, how he behaves; indeed he ſpeaks well, and acts better. Every body loves and admires him. He is a little thoughtful; juſt ſo he was laſt winter. Madame de Martigues thinks ſhe knows the reaſon. For the firſt time in her life ſhe is ſilent; ſhe is impenetrable: The ſecret ſeems to reſt heavy upon her; it occupies her very much, and without being interrogated ſhe exclaims, '*I ſhall not tell it.*'

Madame de Mirande and myſelf are ſeeking faults in this *amiable* Marquis. Count de Piennes maintains that his couſin is perfect; *perfect*, cries Madame de Mirande, let us not ſuffer that, let us never agree that any man can be *perfect*. We are both noticing the Marquis, and will communicate to you the reſult of our obſervations. His perſon is truly handſome; it is noble and graceful; we muſt relinquiſh the idea of criticiſing upon it. But his mind muſt be great indeed, if he can conceal from us the weak ſide of his heart. Adieu my dear Count; what a letter have I written!

LETTER V.

INDEED you are right. When we are not born with an inequality or caprice of mind, we ſhould ſtudy to know the principle of every different feeling. One ſhould not ſay, '*I am ſad, I know not why.*' But my dear friend, what we were not, we do become.

I am in an ill humour, yes, in an ill humour, indeed; the world fatigues me, ſolitude frightens, every thing tires me.

You aſk me what can diſturb the ſerenity of my mind. Nothing, aſſuredly. But there is a calm as much to be dreaded as the ſtorm; at leaſt I think ſo. The ſoul muſt be agitated by acute pain, or a lively pleaſure. If the ſentiment of the one, or the charm of the other, do not preſs upon its ſpring, its weak and ſlow motions leave us in inaction; without will, without deſire, we exiſt, but we do not cheriſh our exiſtence. Every object becomes indifferent. This indifference begets *ennui*, a wearineſs which is the moſt inſupportable evil of life. I am diſpoſed to ſay with POPE'S Eloiſa,

" *Here Melancholy sits, and round her throws*
" *A death-like silence, and a dread repose:*
" *Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,*
" *Shades every flower, and darkens ev'ry green;*
" *Deepens the murmurs of the falling floods,*
" *And breathes a browner horror on the woods.*"

I have been at Neuilli theſe three days—my ſiſter does not divert my reflections. Becauſe ſhe was born twenty years before me, ſhe pretends to make me adopt her opinions; as ſoon as ſhe begins to lecture, I fall aſleep. Madame de Martigues comes for me to-morrow; ſhe writes that the Marquis de Montalais has diſappeared. No one ſees, or meets him, no one knows where he is to be found. On this, ſhe tells me a hundred fooliſh things. She wiſhes to *inform* me, to *entrust* me; nobody has *told* her any thing, ſhe has *guessed*; nothing binds her to *silence*, yet ſhe has *promised* not to ſpeak; but to *conceal* from *me*—then ſhe declares ſhe will ſay nothing. So you ſee the ſecret muſt ſoon eſcape. Is it true, that the Marchioneſs de Montalais is ugly, very ugly? Good God, this would then be a very ſtrange match.

You deſire our ſtanzas; I ſend them herewith; take care what judgment you paſs reſpecting them; if you call them bad, we will deny you common ſenſe; if you praiſe them, Madam de Martigues will ſay, poor Count! the country has already ſpoiled his taſte. Adieu.

LETTER VI.

I HAVE juſt enjoyed the moſt delicious pleaſure. Madame de Mirande is at laſt reconciled with the rich brother of her mother. He dined here. He himſelf entreated me to invite Count de Termes. Every thing is granted—every thing ſettled. The good, the generous Monſ. de Meri actually gives his niece 30,000 livres a year, and aſſures to her two thirds of his eſtate. I ſhall not loſe the pleaſure of being with her. Termes conſents to take the wing which M. de Sancerre occupied. It is large, and may eaſily be divided into two commodious apartments. As I will not on any account change my ſituation, all that ſide of the houſe is entirely uſeleſs to me. The marriage of Madame de Mirande is fixed for the middle of next month.

The old Marſhaleſs de Termes is at the height of joy. She eagerly deſired this union. She gives nothing to her grandſon, but ſhe interferes in every thing. Articles to regulate, merchants and jewellers ſhops to rummage, workmen to quarrel with, a liſt of company to make out, in which it will be impoſſible not to offend five or ſix relations. This diverts her, reanimates her.

M. de Montalais conſents to receive the young officer whom you recommend; no doubt he writes you ſo. Without exaggeration, his wife is odious. In ſeeing her picture yeſterday at Madame de Com-

manges's, I thought I should have fainted. How cruel were his parents to force so amiable a man to marry against his inclination, this ugly heiress. And yet he treats her with so much attention, that she seems to be the choice of his heart. This woman is happy, my dear Count, she is truly happy! Equally rich, much younger and more favoured by nature, how different from hers, have I found my lot! I will not dwell upon these ideas, they would afflict me. Adieu.

LETTER VII.

YOU intreat me to entrust you with our remarks on the Marquis de Montalais, and with such earnestness too as surprises me. Indeed we have made but little progress in our observations. Madame de Mirande is too much engaged in receiving the felicitations of her friends, in sharing the delight of Termes, in enjoying the raptures of so tender a lover, to give herself any strange or frivolous cares. For me whose heart nothing is suffered to affect, who remain a mere spectatrix in the midst of a society agitated by so many different interests, I may perhaps, without partiality, judge all those who compose it.

I think precisely of Montalais, what I thought of him the last winter; he is dangerous. A man who adds to the finest person, the rarest qualities of mind, whose delicate heart is not debased by those foolish and transitory passions, by those libertine and vicious attachments which are apt to destroy all taste and sentiment—a man who discharges so well all his duties, shews so much humanity, who is so distinguished in the world, so dear to his relations, to his friends——ah! yes, I think him dangerous. His temper is even, his mind ingenuous, he has talents, sprightliness—the sound of his voice is so sweet, his

countenance ſo pleaſant, his mien ſo graceful, his ſmile ſo agreeable!—my friend, a prudent woman ſhould ſhut her door againſt him—mine ſhould be ſo to him were he free.

But after all, who knows whether ſuch a ſeducing appearance does not conceal a falſe heart, a mind full of baſeneſs and cunning. A ſad experience has early taught me to ſuſpect the beſt eſtabliſhed reputations. I have examined men who were admired; few have proved worthy of my eſteem. You are perhaps the only perſon whoſe ſentiments, conformable to your conduct, do not contradict the opinion I had received of your character.

I know not why you continue to ſpeak to me of the ſchemes of Madame de Valance. Her nephew is *rich, well made, ſensible, charming.* All this may be; but how is it material to me? I do not want him. My liberty is dear to me—it is dearer to me than ever. It conſtitutes my joy, my happineſs—My *happiness!* and am I happy! Ah! my friend, I experience, for the firſt time, that vague deſires may give diſquiet to actual enjoyments.

Here is Madame de Mirande, lovely as an angel, beautiful as Aſtrea. She throws herſelf negligently upon the ſopha. I propoſe to her to write. I *cannot.* Shall I write for you? *Oh! yes.* What ſhall I ſay for you? *Whatever you please.* It pleaſes me to aſſure you of her indolence, and of her friendſhip.

Termes is at Chantilly with Comminges, Themines, and the Marquis de Montalais. You gueſs the ſubject of Madame de Mirande's leiſure. For theſe two days paſt our ſociety has been inſupportable. Madame de Martigues coughs, Count de Piennes limps about, Madame de Themines builds caſtles, my ſiſter ſcolds, her huſband whiſtles and halloos, St. Maigrin is ſcheming, his brother ogles and makes wry faces, the old Marſhal tells ſtories, his niece

pouts, Dupleſſis quizzes, Madame de Mirande gapes and I ſleep.

LETTER VIII.

YOU are ſurpriſed, much ſurpriſed at ſome expreſſions in my letters. Still more ſurpriſed to hear me ſay in ſpeaking of Madame de Montalais—*My lot has been different from hers. No husband*, you think, *had a more tender regard for his wife than the Count de Sancerre;* and if an inconceivable *antipathy* had not *shut my eyes* againſt his *merit*, I ſhould not have preferred a reſidence at Mondelis to the pleaſure of rendering *happy* an *amiable* man, by whom I was *passionately beloved.*

Beloved! I beloved? *passionately beloved!* Ah, my dear Count, you are far from imagining how much this kind of reproach affli&s me; what a deep wound it may open afreſh. Time, my friends, diſſipation, a little philoſophy, have reſtored a calm to my mind; but without effacing the traces of thoſe cruel darts by which my heart felt itſelf pierced, during the courſe of this union, to all appearance, ſo well aſſorted.

For theſe four years paſt have you ſeen me irregular or capricious? Am I incapable of attachment, of gratitude, of tenderneſs? Is my taſte changed? Do you perceive any inconſtancy in my conduct, any contradiction in my deſires? Why did M. de Sancerre alone experience my caprices? Has not my conduct towards others, given you occaſion to reflect, and enabled you to diſcover a ſtriking difference between my natural way of thinking, of acting, and the character they have given me? You *love* me, you *esteem* me, and yet your prejudice remains; you believe that, *attentive to the happiness of all around me*, I could have

rendered my husband *unhappy!* And why then do you esteem me? You were attached to Monf. de Sancerre; when he was wounded, you acted the part of a generous friend. You carried him yourself from the field of battle, and if he could have spoken, I doubt not, that, having no longer any need of diffimulation, the truth would have for once escaped his lips;—perhaps in his last moments he would have ventured to confide to you his secret, and the extreme condescension of a wife accused by himself of so much inflexibility.

You did not know M. de Sancerre; no, my dear friend, you did not know him. Is it in the camp, at court, in the midst of those circles in which we meet, that it is possible to penetrate the character and judge the heart of a man? If you were asked to draw a faithful portrait of this friend, how would you trace it? Sancerre was brave and resolute, you would say; he loved war, and behaved well in it. Noble in his expence, he supported well his rank, knew how to please his master, and neglected not his fortune. I was his executor; I found his affairs in good order, and his fortune improved by his œconomy.

What an eulogium, my friend! Weak as it is, to the shame of morals, few persons like Sancerre deserve it. But to have no gross vices, is this to deserve regard? Not to behave on all occasions in a disgusting manner, is this sufficient to appear worthy of esteem in the eyes of an enlightened and delicate woman?

I have always avoided entering with you into these useless details. The friendship which bound you to Sancerre, should have kept you at a distance from his widow. The charge he gave you, has compelled you to see her. Soon you took a pleasure in cultivating an acquaintance, which perhaps you should not have sought. I have respected the memory of M. de Sancerre; I left you in your good opinion, I would still leave you in it; but be assured that it was

not a *caprice* which made me *prefer a residence at Mondelis to the house of my husband.* His intereſt, the goodneſs of my heart, a decent pride, the fear of not being always miſtreſs of myſelf, induced me to live at a diſtance from an ingrate, who was ſtill dear to me perhaps, notwithſtanding the knowledge I then had of his unworthineſs. Do not exclaim againſt me; do not repeat the vain ſpeeches of the multitude; take notice that I ſpeak the truth. Yes I loved the Count de Sancerre; he poſſeſſed all my heart. If you were to know ——— But do not let us ſpeak of a period of my life, the remembrance of which is ſtill painful. Adieu. Madame de Martigues told me yeſterday to ſcold you for her—I have forgotten why.

LETTER IX.

I AM at length going to communicate to you our remarks on M. de Montalais. They praiſe his ſweetneſs, his equanimity, his prudence. In the firſt place he is not at all accommodating; the leaſt thing diſpleaſes him, and this wiſe man pouts like a child.

I went yeſterday to the opera. Never was I ſo tired. Madame de Planci was there; ſhe is a ſingular woman; ſhe ſo multiplies herſelf, ſhe is ſeen every where—I never go out without meeting her. Do you not think the time long when ſhe ſhews herſelf?

The Marquis came into my box; Madame de Planci beckoned to him repeatedly; he went to ſpeak with her—their converſation was long, animated; one ſpoke with warmth, the other with vivacity; Madame de Planci appeared charmed, and when Montalais returned, joy ſparkled in his countenance. I told him Madame de Planci dreſſed her head ill, and that he ought to tell her of it. You never ſaw a man ſo diſconcerted; he bluſhed and remained ſilent.

In coming out I took the hand of Chevalier de Nemond; the Marquis gave his to Madame de Martigues. I heard him tell her, I am *unhappy, very unhappy.* The remainder of the evening he did not ſpeak ten words; at cards he confuſed every thing; at ſupper, did not know what he was doing; what an affront! He could not forgive me for having ſpoken ill of the taſte of Madame de Planci, or the ſkill of her women.

——Montalais has not the merit which Madame de Martigues finds in him—No, he has not. So little maſter of himſelf, not to be able to conceal his trouble, his agitation! this clearly ſhews the weakneſs of this ſoul ſo *noble*, ſo *ſuperior!*—beſides I hate duplicity. Why does he pretend to ſo much indifference? Is it an exceſs of vanity which induces him to appear little ſuſceptible of paſſion? Does he announce his wiſdom as an antidote againſt his charms? In truth, I believe ſo. It is the fear of being loved, ſought after, embarraſſed, which renders him *unhappy, very unhappy.* Indeed I was very near deceiving myſelf in regard to his worth. I began to have for him the moſt ſincere eſteem. This man is——I am ſorry for it, he is—he is like other men.

After all it is ſo much the better. Madame de Thianges was ſaying laſt night, in regard to the ill humour of the Marquis, *M. de Montalais cannot lose too much of his mental perfection in the view of a sensible woman who examines him.* She is right, he will always have enough left to captivate an ordinary woman.

The Marquis of Limeuil has returned from Spain—he begins to trouble me. Every body tells me of his ſentiments, of their conſtancy, of his family, the title which he expects. I ſee nothing but his perſeverance. Ah! my God, why will he not leave me in my tranquillity. I do not deſire Limeuil, nor any one elſe. Who could pleaſe me now? Who deſerve the ſacrifice of my happy liberty! No one, indeed my friend no one.

I have this moment received a letter from Madame de Kerlanes; ſhe gives me many thanks, too many. The note of her daughter has affected me; both place too great a value on ſo ſmall a ſervice. Indeed, my dear Count, to give, is to procure a real pleaſure, and, as I think, very independent of thoſe whom we oblige; their gratitude may add to it, their ingratitude cannot deſtroy it.

I have promiſed you *explanations*. I remember; do not hurry me; I will give them to you; you ſhall impart them to Madame de Kerlanes; her ideas reſpecting the Marſhal de Tende have afflicted me; I ſhould be ſorry to leave ſuch erroneous impreſſions upon her mind. Adieu. My compliments to Madame de Mariadek. Were ſhe not your ſiſter, I could not pardon her for detaining you ſo long.

LETTER X.

JUSTICE obliges me to inform you, that I had very ill interpreted the conduct and ſentiments of the Marquis de Montalais. Madame de Planci, a few days ago, entruſted him to ſettle an affair of delicacy between herſelf and her brother; this was done agreeably to her wiſhes; ſhe thanked the Marquis for his attention. Charmed at ſeeing her ſatisfied, he left her box with an air of gaiety; his joy aroſe from the goodneſs of his heart; I had aſſigned a very different reaſon. We ought always to be on our guard againſt this inconceivable malignity which leads us to pronounce haſtily, to decide, from trifling appearances. Suddenly Madame de Planci was pictured to my mind as a ſilly woman, and I ſaw the Marquis paſſionately in love with her. I have done them both wrong. They do not know it; but I do, and I reproach myſelf for it.

How your abſence afflicts mé! What! you ſhall not return! I wiſh to ſee you; I wiſh to talk with you. One cannot write every thought. For a ſhort time paſt I have not been in my uſual temper; perhaps I have the vapours; this is an evil without pity, is it not? The imagination is ſtruck with aſtoniſhment, is fixed upon one object; we ſee it always; we ſtrive in vain not to think of it; the ſame idea returns inceſſantly; the leaſt noiſe occaſions terror; the heart palpitates; we do not know what we deſire, every thing fatigues.——My God, is this my ſituation! I am afraid, without imagining what frightens me. Often am I like a perſon who ſees himſelf purſued, wiſhes to eſcape, runs, and fears every moment to be overtaken.

I wait your letters with impatience; the words of a true friend, are a healing balm for the wounds of the ſoul; I ſhould rejoice to open to you mine. You have my confidence. In your prudence I could truſt—your friendſhip would direct my ſteps, it would ſave me. But from what? from whom? Where are my dangers? My mind is troubled, my reaſon wanders—the effect of this cruel malady.——Ah! my friend, I am changed, every object around me convinces me of it. I ſtill love you however; my regard for you is always the ſame.—Here is Madame de Martigues.

From MADAME DE MARTIGUES.

YES, here I am; good day, Sir; have you not finiſhed the buſineſs which detained you? and when may we expect you? Is it not fooliſh in you to ſtay ſo long at Rennes? Oh, fy! why do you not haſten to felicitate Madame de Mirande and your friend Termes? Beſides, if you ſtay much longer, you will get perfectly tired; thoſe people of buſineſs will make you as dull, ſtupid, wretched, as themſelves Apropos of the tireſome; Count de Piennes, proteſts to me,

ſwears, that I can have no excuſe not to marry him before the end of the winter. Madame de Sancerre is of his opinion; you will not fail to join them; as for Madame de Mirande, ſhe would marry every body. Let me tell you that this is one of the moments when my good genius, I fear, abandons me, or that I am tempted, or that the example of Madame de Mirande might——Ah! what a wretched thought ariſes! We ſhall ſee. I promiſe nothing. I have need of an example ſtill more ſtriking; that of Madame de Sancerre; I am meditating a grand deſign; ſhe is ignorant of it, and ſo are you. I intend to make you admire, one day, my foreſight, my penetration, the extent of my views. I am trifling, they ſay; Oh, yes, *trifling;* you ſhall ſee. Adieu. A thouſand tender compliments to Madame de Mariadek.

From MADAME DE SANCERRE.

SHE has filled all my paper; I have ſcarcely room enough to aſſure you once more of my regard.

LETTER XI.

NEITHER *indolence* nor *indifference*, have made me paſs one week without writing to you; I was not at Paris. On my arrival here, I haſten to inform you of my adventures.

Monday laſt we were alone, Madame de Mirande and myſelf; Madame de Martigues comes in, then Madame de Themines; we chat, we laugh, we know not about what; no matter, it is amuſing. Suddenly a thought comes into the head of Madame de Martigues. My dear, ſays ſhe, I am tired of the town, I long for ſome charming retreat. Paris is fatiguing; to ſee always the ſame objects, to hear ſlander continually, to be every evening in this ſad circle of fools,

whose impertinence is disgusting; what a miserable uniformity! let us taste at least the pleasure of a little variety; for example, let us go tire ourselves.

This will be difficult, says Madame de Mirande; we can never be tired with those we love. Oh, says Madame de Martigues, let us make the experiment; let us go, all four of us, to the country seat I am going to purchase; no body in the world shall know it; they will seek us every where in vain. What wicked conjectures will they make respecting this astonishing eclipse! They will tell the most silly and ridiculous stories! We will laugh at them all on our return.

But how shall I arrange this affair with M. de Themines, says the young Marchioness: Oh! can you not sport a little with your *dear husband?* replies Madame de Martigues; can you not tell him you are going to Versailles? She consents to it. Madame de Mirande makes her objections, they are overruled; she gives up; I suffer myself to be prevailed upon; the party is fixed, secrecy promised, and to-morrow we set out.

A charming house, light and airy, its gay apartments inspire us with joy; and here we are laughing at all our friends, picturing to ourselves their astonishment, their countenances full of surprise and inquietude. Madam de Martigues undertakes to personate Count de Piennes. See him at my door, says she, disputing with my servant. *Is she not here?* No. *Do you not expect her?* No. *Not this evening?* No. *Nor to-morrow?* No. *Nor the day after?* No. *Does no body know where she is?* No. *I shall die.* And my servant always no. We then imagine him running to my house, no one there. To the others, not the least discovery. Four ladies fled, disappeared! What must be thought of it! what shall we believe!—But poor Termes, says Madame de Mirande, he will be disconsolate; his distress cannot be amusing. Ma-

dame de Martigues replies to all; *Termes is reasonable, he will take patience.* My husband will lock me up for ever, says Madame de Themines: *Ah! well, we will visit you at the convent.* I assure them that my sister will take possession of my estate. *So much the better, we will sue the avaricious lady for a restitution.* Then she exclaims, let us go to making poetry upon our friends, and ourselves, especially let us not spare ourselves, that we may, with a better grace, severely ridicule others.

This fine proposition is applauded; we all range ourselves round a table; one takes up the pen, thinks, studies; one stamps upon the floor; another runs her fingers into her hair, bites her nails, and exclaims, I know not how to begin: as for Madame de Martigues, nothing stops her, her pen fairly runs, every thing which first presents, she writes.

In the midst of this grave occupation, we are suddenly interrupted by a noise of horses, which is heard in the yard, and by the sound of confused voices; some one demands entrance—our servants resist. Madame de Mirande, almost ready to faint, exclaims, my God, they are assassins! I grow pale; Madame de Themines covers her face; Madame de Martigues writes on, makes signs with her hands, and demands a little silence.

The door is soon forced; the thieves rush into the parlour. Themines, Count de Piennes, Termes, Comminges, his wife, his two sisters, and M. de Montalais, more charming than ever in a hunting dress. Now see Madame de Martigues in bursts of laughter so loud, so often repeated, as to excite those of every one else. An attempt is made to speak; impossible, nothing can be heard, and a long time passes before any salutations can be made. I complain of the treason. Madame de Themines confesses the indiscretion; we scold at her, her husband defends her, and obtains her pardon; our joy increases, and never in my life did I pass a more agreeable evening.

Six days paſſed in this ſmiling country, have glided away imperceptibly. M. de Montalais is ſetting out for Saint Cernin, to ſeek the Marchioneſs and conduct her to Paris. My God! how he is beloved! his friends cannot be ſeparated from him: They embrace him; they make him promiſe to return immediately; they ſcarcely give him time for ſo ſmall a journey. Ah! every thing induces me to haſten my return, ſaid he to Count de Piennes with an air of tenderneſs and affection, every thing calls me back; I leave here all that is dear to me! He does not reckon to be abſent more than twelve days.

Your third letter is juſt brought to me; I will read it at Madame de Comminges', where I am going to ſpend the evening. Madame de Thianges, who conducts me there, is out of patience waiting for me. Adieu.

Always complaining of my negligence. You blame me, you *fear*, you *dare not tell me*, and then a hundred queſtions. My friend I do not wiſh to anſwer them, indeed I know not how. As for the details which you demand, you ſhall have them without much further delay. Good night: I am going to ſeek a little reſt; I know not whether I ſhall find it. Another queſtion my dear Count, *And why, Madam, may you not find it?* You become curious; you are indeed in danger of becoming indiſcreet. I have already told you one cannot write all one thinks.

LETTER XII.

I AM going to comply with my promiſe, to juſtify the Marſhal de Tende, and inform you why M. d'Eſtelan diſinherited his ſon. Neither my mother nor the Marſhal were capable of giving themſelves up to any ſordid conſiderations of intereſt;

do not judge them from the ſtories of a woman prejudiced or ill informed; judge them from their conduct, and from facts.

The Count de Dammartin, a widower of the age of fifty, not caring to undertake new engagements, rich by the number of his places, by the favours of the king, married his only daughter to the Marquis de Thore; gave her all his fortune, with the ſingle exception of his eſtate at Mondelis. Two years after he became violently in love with the ſiſter of Count d'Eſtelan. The ſmall fortune of this lady had condemned her to an unpleaſant retreat. Her brother, ruined, as ſhe was herſelf, by the loſs of a very conſiderable lawſuit, being about to depart for Martinique, whither he was invited by a friend who had the command at that place, intreated her, preſſed her, to prefer the hand of Count de Dammartin, to the unpromiſing alternative of accompanying him in the voyage he was going to undertake. She married him. I came into the world the ſixth year of this union, and loſt my father before I could know him.

A widow at twenty-ſeven, reduced to a penſion of 10,000 livres, my mother fixed her reſidence at Mondelis. As this eſtate was to become entirely mine, ſhe took a particular care in rendering it fertile; every year ſhe made ſmall acquiſitions, and without neglecting to ornament and improve the buildings, ſhe at length doubled the value of an eſtate which in the hands of my father was only a feat for pleaſure.

Of all thoſe which at preſent belong to me, Mondelis is the only one where I ſhould delight to dwell. Every thing here is intereſting to me; I am here ſurrounded with teſtimonies of my mother's kindneſs, of her care and attention; her aſhes reſt here; they render this reſidence dear and reſpectable. Ah, my friend, how often have I wept over the marble which covers them; how often have I called upon my mother at the foot of her tomb, and invoked

her gentle ſpirit! How much have I regretted the loſs of this dear friend, whoſe counſels were ſo neceſſary to my youth, whoſe conſolations would have been ſo ſoothing to my afflicted heart! I was educated under the immediate attention of the Counteſs of Dammartin; ſhe herſelf preſided over my inſtruction, and ſought to fill my mind with thoſe maxims of truth and virtue, which accuſtom us to think juſtly, to love our duties, and practiſe them without an effort. Sincere and ingenuous, I knew neither doubt nor diſtruſt; engroſſed by the ſoft affections of which infancy is ſuſceptible, all my moments were happy, when M. de Sancerre was preſented to me as a candidate for my regard, as the man deſtined to partake of my happineſs, and augment it.

The Marſhal de Tende, his maternal uncle, had always intended this match; the relation and friend of Count de Dammartin, he reſpected his widow, had a tender friendſhip for her, paſſed whole months at Mondelis, conceived an affectionate regard for me, and made known his intentions of adding to my moderate fortune a generous portion of his.

You know that the Count de Sancerre was an orphan from the cradle, and had little reaſon to expect the opulence which you have ſeen him enjoy. His parents, prodigal and negligent, died young, leaving to their ſon their eſtate in diſorder, their lands under mortgage. The Marſhal, accuſtomed to buſineſs, accepted the guardianſhip, paid the debts, redeemed the lands, and brought them into value. Being the only creditor of his ward, his advances abſorbed two thirds of an eſtate which they had rendered conſiderable; Sancerre was therefore educated in an extreme dependence upon his uncle; and as he was naturally very mindful of his intereſt, he invariably ſhewed him the greateſt ſubmiſſion, in order to excite his favour and obtain his bounty.

I was not thirteen, when the Marſhal de Tende informed my mother of his intentions with regard to the Count and myſelf. Madame de Dammartin received with joy, indeed with a tranſport of gratitude, the propoſal of an eſtabliſhment which far ſurpaſſed her hopes. Our marriage was ſecretly fixed, and, unfortunately for me, neither time nor accident changed the diſpoſition of our parents.

Three months after this arrangement took place, M. d'Eſtelan arrived in France. He took an affectionate pleaſure in coming to Mondelis to ſurpriſe a dear ſiſter who, for nineteen years paſt, had ſcarcely heard of him, and never indeed expected his return. Their firſt interview was affecting; they embraced each other, wept, interrogated both at once, while tears of joy interrupted their words; again they embraced, and were for a moment loſt in the ſeeming illuſion, almoſt doubting the reality of their happy meeting.

Theſe lively and natural emotions ſubſiding a little, M. d'Eſtelan informed my mother that on his leaving France, he had an intention to marry a rich widow, whoſe favour and fortune were at the direction of his friend; but as his heart often rejected the counſels of prudence, this deſign was not carried into effect. Indeed he diſdained to purchaſe a ſplendid alliance, an inglorious indolence, at the ſhameful ſacrifice of all true pride, of every ſpark of ſenſibility. A young lady of Spain, deſcended from a long train of illuſtrious anceſtors, whoſe only fortune was her titles, the charms of her perſon, the virtues and accompliſhments which ſhe derived from the noble examples her family had afforded, inſpired him with the tendereſt affection. He married her; ſhe preſented him with a ſon. In a year after, the Counteſs d'Eſtelan died; her huſband, diſconſolate at her loſs, diſguſted with a country in which he had hitherto been detained only by his obedience to the wiſhes of a lady he

adored, haſtened to ſell his eſtate and return to his native country, there peacefully to enjoy a large fortune, which he had acquired by the careful aſſiſtance of his friend, by long induſtry and aſſiduous attention.

My mother complained that he had not brought his ſon with him to Mondelis. M. d'Eſtelan ſighed, and caſting the moſt affecting looks towards me, alas! ſaid he, from his infancy I had deſtined him for my niece; but he is little worthy of Adelaide or of me. He is a hopeleſs fellow, vulgar in his ideas, rough, obſtinate, intractable; no conſideration ſtops him, no check reſtrains him; he ſacrifices every thing to the moſt trifling whims: neither promiſes nor threats, kindneſs nor rigor, nothing can change, nothing ſoften, a temper ſo paſſionate, preſuming, ungovernable. He has occaſioned the death of his mother, I fear he will haſten mine. I am aſhamed and unhappy for having given life to a wretch capable of degrading my name, diſhonoring it, perhaps rendering it odious.

My mother exerted all her influence to calm the grief of her brother, and after ſome time ſucceeded in moderating his regrets. He urged her to quit her retreat, to return to Paris, there to live with him. He wiſhed, he ſaid, to divide his fortune between his ſon and me. The Counteſs of Dammartin promiſed to arrange her affairs ſo as to gratify his wiſhes. Charmed with this hope, he left us; but an unfortunate event deſtroyed, at once, all his proſpects of happineſs.

Young Eſtelan, having no meaſure of propriety but his own irregular, unprincipled will, forgetting his father, forgetting every ſentiment of pride or delicacy, conceived a violent paſſion for a girl of the very loweſt and moſt abject condition in life. Hurried on by the precipitate ſuggeſtions of love, the natural impetuoſity of his temper, and inflamed

by an artful reſiſtance, he propoſed to marry her. No ſooner was this degrading plan formed, than raſhly executed. Still urged by his ſhameful paſſion, and defying all reſtraint, he privately broke open the ſtrong box of his father, took out upwards of 600,000 livres in ingots of gold, ſome jewels, and making his eſcape in the night with the girl he had made his wife, he fled in haſte to Breſt, where finding a veſſel ready to put to ſea, he embarked, after having written the following letter to his father.

SIR,

I have married Zabette, the girl of my fancy; contented with the lot which I have chosen, I am going to cross the seas, to live at my pleasure, and seek that sort of happiness which best suits me. You may regard me, Sir, as no longer in being; I shall never presume to appear before you again, nor do I expect much ever to have the inclination.

M. d'Eſtelan was returning from Mondelis to Paris, when he met one of the meſſengers who had been diſpatched to inform him of the flight of his ſon, and the ſhocking circumſtances attending it. The Count was ſo grievouſly afflicted by this diſtreſſing event, that his health, already impaired, began immediately to decline. He fell dangerouſly ill; my mother hearing of his ſituation, repaired without delay to the Abbey of Martrai, and devoted all her attention to her brother. M. d'Eſtelan, after a long illneſs, in which he ſuffered beyond deſcription, recovered a little; but his recovery did not promiſe a return of his ſtrength; he languiſhed for more than eight months; neither the aſſiſtance of art, nor the conſolations of friendſhip, could heal the wounds of a heart, ſo ſadly pierced and torn.

All his eſtate was acquired; he had the right to diſpoſe of it. Deteſting the baſeneſs of his ſon, he diſinherited him by an authentic inſtrument of wri-

ting for that purpoſe, and confirmed this diſinheriſon in his will. He named me his ſole legatee, and gave me all his eſtate, valued at near three millions of livres. He directed that I ſhould be put into poſſeſſion of the ſame immediately at his death, charging me to pay to his ſon a penſion during his life of twenty thouſand livres, if he ſhould return to France, and be found in want.

In a ſhort time after he had made this will, which my mother *did not dictate*, M. d'Eſtelan expired in the arms of a ſiſter, whom the acquiſition of ſo brilliant a fortune could not conſole for his loſs. As my guardian, ſhe was put into poſſeſſion of the whole eſtate of her brother.

The Marſhal de Tende, then charged with a ſecret and important negotiation, was in Savoy when M. d'Eſtelan arrived in France. He did not return until a month after his death; he did not know him; how then could he have *directed his last will?* Noble, juſt, and diſintereſted, he could never have excited a father to puniſh. You were ſurpriſed perhaps to ſee me defend with ſo much warmth the character of a man, who at the cloſe of his life gave me ſuch proofs of hatred; he became my enemy, it muſt be confeſſed; but I ought not to complain of him; he thought me capricious, full of diſſimulation, ungrateful; how could he avoid ceaſing to love me? His prejudice has not leſſened my friendſhip, it has not weakened my gratitude. You admired at Mondelis the tomb which I had erected to the memory of this reſpectable man; it is not a monument of pride, of vanity; no, it is that of a tender veneration, of a remembrance always preſent, always dear; of the many pains and bitter regrets which Sancerre delighted to make me feel; of theſe the moſt afflicting yet was that falſehood, that cruel treachery which he employed to rob me of the eſteem and affection of this ſenſible, this generous relation.

On ſeeing the Marſhal de Tende again, my mother was happy in having it in her power to give a rich heireſs to his nephew; ſhe ſaw Sancerre; he was then twenty-four years; he appeared to her formed to pleaſe; ſhe wiſhed that the union of our hearts might precede our engagement. The Marſhal agreed to bring his nephew to Mondelis, as ſoon as the affairs of my mother would permit her to return thither. In a ſhort time after ſhe did return. I took my leave of the Convent. Two months further paſſed away without offering any thing to trouble the happy tranquillity of my heart. But the time was approaching when my own experience was to teach me that an apparent augmentation of our happineſs, is often the ſecret and unſuſpected cauſe of our entire deſtruction.

I have here told you enough, my dear Count, to ſatisfy your curioſity and remove the doubts of Madame de Kerlanes.—I never had any accounts of the fate of young Eſtelan. I have ſought after him indeed with much care; but in vain. Notwithſtanding his unworthineſs, his rights are natural and legitimate. If he were living, I could not enjoy, with any pleaſure, a fortune which the law indeed gives to me, but which my principles would oblige me to reſtore. Without doubt he is dead. Since the death of Count de Sancerre, I have ſet apart from my income the twenty thouſand livres which my uncle deſtined to his ſon, *if he ſhould be found in want.* This fund belongs to all thoſe who are really in ſuch ſituation. I can advance a further ſum of two hundred louis d'ors, if Madame de Mariadek deſire it, to place Mademoiſelle Mariadek in a ſuitable ſtyle and appearance, to be introduced to the family ſhe is about to enter. Adieu.

LETTER XIII.

I AM truly affected by the reproaches with which your laſt letter is filled. No, my dear Count, no, you have not *loſt my confidence*; but why have you this preſſing curioſity? Why *entreat* me, *conjure* me to unfold to you a myſtery, which nothing hitherto could induce me to develope? It is yet concealed even from my relations, ſo much intereſted in knowing the motives of my conduct. M. de Sancerre is no more; does it become me to tarniſh his memory? to tear from him the eſteem of a friend who cheriſhes his remembrance? Ah! do not let me diſturb his repoſe. I have loved him, hated him, deſpiſed him; I confeſs it. His death ought to have effaced my reſentment; I wiſh to forget every thing; happy if in pardoning all, I may forget how much I have had to pardon.

If, as you ſay, *my conduct has proved to all France my extreme averſion to the Count de Sancerre*, leave *all France* in their error; how am I now concerned in removing their prejudices? I could not ſpeak a word in this behalf, without wounding more than one heart, and perhaps you are yourſelf intereſted in my ſilence. You *would not have voluntarily removed yourſelf from an object agreeable in your view!* Ah! I believe it. Your ſex is neither proud, nor delicate; its own ſatisfaction is the principle of every movement. If in the ſame ſituation yours and mine ſhould follow the ſole inſpiration of our hearts, it would naturally guide us through different routes.

My manner of thinking is well known to you. But is it known to you in regard to ſubjects on which we have never converſed? *Boldness of heart, indifference, pride, alone keep me from a second engagement.* Who has told you this? From what do you judge? This idea is a conſequence of your former prejudices.

Ah! my friend, you deceive yourself; under the appearance of this coldness with which they reproach me, I feel that I have a tender heart, perhaps too tender! Instructed by misfortune, I have been willing to examine it, to know, to prove it; my heart, sometimes ready to yield, has always found reasons to defend itself. The man whom we thoroughly penetrate, is rarely the man we choose. One only has appeared to me to unite all those qualities, all those virtues capable of determining me.—Alas! by an unaccountable contradiction in my destiny, I dare not suffer my thoughts to dwell upon this object of my sincere esteem. Do not reply to this; do not ask any explanation of these few lines; no questions, not a word! Suffer me to treat you as I do myself. Should I not be permitted to conceal from you the sentiments which I dare not avow to myself?

Again assure Madame de Valance that her endeavours are without effect. I do not wish to change my situation. I wish it less now than ever. After all, I have every reason to be tranquil. My taste, my philosophy, attach me to the present scene; my friends, books, amusing studies, long walks, a small circle of confidential acquaintances, where the heart always speaks, often the sprightly mind; is not this enough to occupy us in this short journey of life? My dear friend, upon a route where one is certain never to repass, it is not necessary to fix our attention on any objects with a view to appropriate them; it is sufficient to observe them, and be amused by them.

Madame de Mirande on Sunday next will become Countess de Termes. Madame de Martigues wished to wait for the return of the Marquis de Montalais; Termes has not the complaisance to agree to this. M. de Piennes has counted in vain upon the force of example; poor Count! he will have cause to repeat, for a longer time yet, *Ah! why did I ever see her? Why, have I loved her?*

I am very ſerious, indeed I am ſad; every thing appears to me ſo uniform, ſo dull, around me! You have good reaſon to remain in Brittany; all here is tireſome, nothing to divert, nothing to revive us: Paris does not afford a ſingle pleaſure that has any life in it; we meet here none but the ſilly or the ſick. Adieu; you may place me in either of theſe two claſſes, which you think I moſt deſerve.

LETTER XIV.

I WRITE to you in haſte my dear Count, to tell you I have not time to write. I am this minute going out with Madame de Martigues, M. de Themines, and his charming companion. The Marſhaleſs wiſhes her grandſon to be married at her houſe, at Fere. They are making great preparations at that place; fetes will be given; every one is ſpeaking of it, every one is full of it; the pleaſure announced, promiſed, is very rarely experienced.

Indeed you make me almoſt angry; *no secret in ſpeaking to a friend*, you ſay; *friendſhip does not admit of any reserve.* I think differently; we ſhould conceal from a friend thoſe ſecrets which may give him pain. I will conſider whether it be poſſible for me to ſatisfy your curioſity without violating that friendſhip which you dare to doubt. The more I recollect the details into which I ſhould be obliged to enter, the leſs proper do I think it to ſubmit them to your view. I will conſider, however, as I have told you. Adieu. I can wait no longer; this moment muſt I leave you.

LETTER XV.

AFTER having thought much of it, I now write expreſsly to entreat you no longer to inſiſt on

my giving an explanation of the behaviour of M. de Sancerre in regard to me. I ſincerely reproach myſelf for having ſuffered ſome expreſſions to eſcape my pen, which have excited this deſire.

I repeat it to you, you are intereſted in my ſilence: a perſon whom you loved much will find herſelf alſo to be intereſted; the part which ſhe has had in my regret, in my conduct, is inſeparable from the confidence you would demand from me. Ah! if nothing required my reſerve, how could I refuſe myſelf the ſoft indulgence of opening to you my whole heart; to pour into your boſom a feeling of my ſufferings, and excite your compaſſion for diſtreſs which is ſtill alive while I write it? Why ſhould I not juſtify my character and diſpoſition in the view of one whoſe eſteem I think ſo neceſſary to my happineſs?

All the proofs of my invariable kindneſs to an ungrateful man are in my own hands. The caſket with a ſecret ſpring, which M. de Sancerre in his dying moments directed you, by ſigns, to take charge of, to carry away, where or for what purpoſe he was unable to tell you; which you found deſignated in his will with theſe words, *to be rendered to Madame* *****; this caſket, the object of his laſt attention, contains the ſecret of his heart and mine.

This *Madame* without name, without title, theſe words *to be rendered*, threw you into an error. You believed his ſervant; he aſſured you that this caſket was coming to me; I had in fact given it to M. de Sancerre; but another was to receive it after his death. You returned it to me; the ſight of it forced from me a ſhriek of diſtreſs. You were ſurpriſed; I opened it in your preſence; my firſt intention was to let you look over the papers with which it was filled; a reflection, more reaſonable, oppoſed it. At my requeſt, you conſented not to take any inventory of it. The few trinkets which were there did not ap-

pear to you of any conſequence to the heirs of M. de Sancerre.

She whom my huſband had intended to render miſtreſs of this caſket, did not dare to reclaim it. I have enjoyed for two years her inquietude, her fears, the continual alarms which muſt have agitated her mind; but I have enjoyed them alone. A remarkable ſingularity, attached to me, to the events of my life, has always conſtrained me to ſhut up my ſentiments with profound ſecrecy, in my own breaſt. I prove ſtill further the caprice of my fortune; ſurrounded by friends affectionate and ſincere, I have not a ſingle one to whom I may open my heart. Motives I have been obliged to conceal, have ever induced me to forego the charms of an agreeable confidence. Ah! you ought indeed to believe it, ſince my heart is not entirely opened to you.

If after what I have told you, you ſtill perſiſt in your wiſh to be informed, I am determined to content you. But my dear Count, if I unfold to you a ſad truth; if I implicate the morals of a perſon to whom the ties of blood and of friendſhip attach you; if I deſtroy the flattering illuſion which has charmed you ſo long, reproach me with nothing, accuſe yourſelf only, your own importunity; take care then how you oblige me to ſpeak.

To-morrow will be a happy day for Termes. Madame de Mirande is ſo beautiful, ſo ſweet and amiable!—Every one envies the lot of the Count.—Termes is ſo handſome, ſo ſenſible and agreeable!—Every one envies the lot of Madame de Mirande. The Marſhaleſs does the honours of this houſe with a ſurpriſing magnificence. I ſhould ſurely be amuſed, did not a certain languor which I cannot deſcribe, a certain ennui, attend all my feelings; uneaſineſs and diſguſt ſpread a dark ſhade around me. I am fearful of my ſtate. What! cannot the joy of Madame

de Mirande enliven me? What! do I not partake, with ſpirit, in the happineſs of a friend ſo dear to my heart? And am I then becoming a miſanthrope? My dear Count, adieu.

LETTER XVI.

At Ferre.

YOU ſtill perſiſt; I yield to your entreaties; contrary to my own wiſhes, with an extreme repugnance, I yield; it is becauſe I love you, becauſe I cannot refuſe you any ſatisfaction I have in my power to give you. Read then, and remember that your unceaſing importunities have drawn from me this ſecret. The proofs are yet in this fatal caſket, put by yourſelf into my hands. On your return you ſhall be at liberty to ſee and examine them.

An explanation of the conduct of Adelaide de Dammartin in regard to the Count de Sancerre.

If any other than yourſelf ſhould read theſe pages, he would be aſtoniſhed to ſee me enter into particulars of which ſo intimate a friend ſhould not be ignorant. Your regard for me, and without doubt the certainty that I had been wronged, had induced you to forbear making any interrogations concerning my conduct towards the Count de Sancerre. The three years which you paſſed at Malta, made you loſe ſight of your friend; when after the death of your brother you returned here, you found M. de Sancerre married, his wife fled to a diſtance from him. They deſcribed her to you ſad and melancholy; they aſſured you that ſhe hated her huſband: My relations, as well as thoſe of M. de Sancerre, every where reported that my antipathy to him proceeded from a derangement of my mind. His aſſiduities, his careſſes, his empaſſioned diſcourſes, all proofs of his

tenderneſs, they repeated; why ſhould you have doubted it; you did not know me. If afterwards my temper and opinions have inſpired you with eſteem, with friendſhip; if you have found me always to be governed by reaſon, attached to my duties, *incapable of exercising an arbitrary authority over those who are my dependents*, how often have you exclaimed to yourſelf with ſurpriſe, *how much is this woman changed.* And yet, my friend, I was at ſixteen the ſame that I was at twenty-ſix; but read and then judge me.

Shortly after the death of M. d'Eſtelan, and the return of my mother to Mondelis, the Marſhal de Tende came there, and brought with him M. de Sancerre. In preſenting him to me, he entreated me to entertain for his dear nephew the ſentiments of an affectionate ſiſter. The perſon of the Count pleaſed me, his ſprightlineſs delighted, and his attentions affected me—Informed of the views of his uncle, he made it his whole ſtudy to pleaſe me, to perſuade me that I was the ſole object of his love. I knew not that it was poſſible to diſſemble or deceive; my heart was eaſily ſurpriſed by an art which I did not know could exiſt.

As nothing oppoſed our union, the Marſhal urged it; in concert with my mother, he directed the articles for it, and inſerted a clauſe for a ſeparation of goods. During the reading of theſe articles, M. de Sancerre could not conceal his ſurpriſe. He expected that his particular advantage would have been ſtudied by his uncle, and thought to be freed, on his marriage, from the dependence in which he had hitherto been held. His ſilence and his bluſhes teſtified his ſecret diſcontent; he was however proceeding to ſign it, when the Marſhal interrupted him: Sir, ſaid he, in ſhowing him a ſealed packet, under this cover are two wills which I have made; in one you are named my univerſal legatee; in the other your wife is called to be my entire ſuc-

ceſſor, and you are forever excluded; the conduct which you may maintain, during my life, will eſtabliſh one of theſe two inſtruments. Your father carried grief and death into the boſom of your ſiſter; this afflicting recollection, always preſent to my mind, induces me to withhold from you the dangerous facility of ruining your wife, and throwing your children into the ſad ſituation in which yourſelf were left. I give you a young lady, handſome, noble, modeſt, amiable and rich—She unites in her all that can excite affection and fix the heart. Her father was my relation; conſanguinity and friendſhip attach me to the daughter of Count Dammartin; it is her happineſs which I ardently deſire; it is for you to advance it. My fortune ſhall be the reward of that care which you may take in making her days happy. If Adelaide, tranquil, contented, happy, thank me, without ceaſing, for having formed the ties by which you are about to be united, then ſhall you find in me an attentive kinſman, a ſolid friend, a tender father. But be careful; if your wife come in tears to reproach me for theſe ſame ties, if you afflict her, if you give to her juſt occaſion for complaint, ſhe ſhall become the ſole object of my affection; I will do every thing for her, for you, nothing. You will loſe at once my eſteem, my tenderneſs, and my eſtate. You have yet time, he added, to reflect; if theſe conditions give you any fear, do not engage. M. de Sancerre anſwered only by a low bow, and taking up the pen, he ſigned the articles.

We were married without pomp and without public ceremony. As I was very delicate and ſcarcely grown, my mother obtained the conſent of the Count that our marriage ſhould not be conſummated until after the expiration of a year, and that I ſhould remain at Mondelis; ſhe promiſed to conduct me to Paris at the beginning of the winter following, and

to receive M. de Sancerre in the house where my father used sometimes to reside; she was about to purchase it of the Marquis de Thore, and, by her orders, preparations were making to improve and ornament it.

M. de Sancerre appeared to consent with reluctance to this arrangement; he left Mondelis with expressions of much regret. His absence afflicted me; I wept often; the presence, the caressing attentions, the affectionate conversation of the Count, had inspired me with all those delightful emotions so naturally excited by love, when the unsuspecting heart receives it without any fear or distrust to alter its flattering charms.

M. de Sancerre wrote to me often. His letters gave me the liveliest and most heart-felt satisfaction. The pains of absence he so tenderly expressed, his desire to live with me, to see me entirely his; his ardent wishes to hasten the period to which his happiness and mine were postponed, augmented every day the vivacity of my sentiments. Simple in my ideas, this happiness with which he entertained me in his letters, appeared to me confined to the single pleasure of seeing him, listening to his agreeable conversation, loving him, being pleased with him, being the dearest object of his heart. Without possessing this, I actually enjoyed it; but my felicity was of short duration. In order to have retained it long, it was necessary that I should have continued ignorant that M. de Sancerre gloried in my credulity.

He was repairing to Germany, where our troops were then assembled, when my mother fell dangerously ill. She did not deceive herself in regard to the first symptoms of her disorder, which was, in her apprehension and in the sad reality, a malignant fever; at her entreaty, Madame de Lugei, who was then at Mondelis, removed me from her chamber,

by the assistance of her attendants and mine, and, in spite of my resistance and my entreaties, took me away in a carriage. Madame de Lugei conducted me to the abbey of Martrai, and confided me to the care of the Abbess. After seven days, passed in fear and hope, I was informed of the death of my amiable mother, my dear, my ever respected mother; an irreparable loss, most sincerely felt, the mournful remembrance of which no length of time can efface.

I could not return to Mondelis, to live there alone; my sister was at Bagniers, where the Marquis de Thore was taking the waters. Madame de Lugei, after a short stay at the abbey, was recalled to Paris by the approaching season; she pressed me to accompany her there, and offered me an apartment at her house. The Marshal de Tende, testamentary executor of my mother, came from Mondelis; he advised me to accept the offer of my relation, while I waited the return of M. de Sancerre. I determined to leave the convent, and went with the Marshal and Madame de Lugei.

I passed a month at Paris sick, languishing, and almost inconsolable. I had not perceived the singularity of Madame de Lugei. This woman, accustomed to act only to be remarked; officious, pressing, awkwardly obliging; trifling, yet vain, giving an importance to every thing; wishing to be known, spoken of, admired; aspiring, impatient, bringing laughter upon herself for her ridiculous pretensions; this woman, active and restless, mixed so much affectation with the care she condescended to bestow upon my conduct, that at last her own excited my attention; it displeased me, and very soon gave me an entire disgust.

My mourning, my youth, and my profound grief, did not permit me to appear in public, and I desired not that dissipation of which I knew not the need;

but hearing Madame de Lugei inceſſantly repeat that her houſe muſt not be open to company during my ſtay with her, that ſhe could not think of expoſing a lady of my tender years to the *seduction* of a *corrupt world*, I felt myſelf hurt, indeed offended, by her attentions, and thought it my duty to withdraw from her the reſtraint upon her ſeeing this world, which in truth ſhe was very far from diſliking. I entreated the Marſhal de Tende to conſent to my going to Treſnel, there to wait the end of the campaign. Ready to gratify my wiſhes, he directed accommodations to be prepared; I haſtened to take poſſeſſion of my new reſidence, and Madame de Lugei loſt from that time my confidence and my friendſhip.

Towards the middle of October, M. de Sancerre arrived; he would not lodge at the houſe of my ſiſter. They were yet working upon the houſe where I now reſide; the Marſhal gave us his ſummer apartments. The day that my ſiſter came to take me from Treſnel, and conduct me to Tende-houſe, was celebrated by a magnificent fete. I paſſed there four months, ſo ſatisfied with my lot, ſo confident of the affection of M. de Sancerre, ſenſible of the paternal attentions of the Marſhal, that the happineſs I then enjoyed appeared to me a ſupreme good. Peaceful ignorance! flattering error! ſweet illuſions! is it then by your aid alone that we are rendered happy? Ah! my friend, my heart yet groans at the remembrance of a time, when deceived, betrayed, ſacrificed, I thqught myſelf loaded with felicity.

M. de Sancerre, troubled by the watchfulneſs of his uncle over all his ſteps, having made ſeveral proofs of my diſcretion, and well convinced himſelf of it, declared to me in confidence that he was paſſionately fond of play, eſpecially of the game of lanſquenet, and dared not openly to avail himſelf of this amuſement which was ſo much deteſted by the Marſhal; he further told me that a company often

passed a part of the night at this play in the house of a lady which communicated with the back part of ours: he shewed an extreme desire to take advantage of this convenience. Credulous and complaisant, I aided my husband to pass the gallery, and, with a wax taper, to gain a small pair of stairs by which he could descend without being heard by the people of the Marshal or mine. So silly was I, that I took a pleasure in seeing myself alone in the confidence of M. de Sancerre! How much did he abuse my simplicity! to what an unworthy purpose did he employ my innocent affection! how often did he enjoy the vile triumph which his art and dissimulation gave him!

I felt a real regret in preparing to leave the house of the Marshal; he cherished me; I loved and respected him. The evening before I was going to set out from Tende-house to seat myself at my new abode, which was now completely fitted, this affectionate relation presented me with a rich casket. The wood of which it was formed, rare and precious, scarcely appeared without; it was covered almost entirely with thin plates of gold interfecting each other; it served for a jewel box, writing apparatus, and case for trifles; it was filled with jewels for my use, perfumes, and a thousand handsome trinkets. The Marshal delighted to see me seek in vain the secret spring which opened it; he was himself obliged to shew me.

Sancerre admired the safety of this secret; he appeared so much pleased with this beautiful casket, that, as I did not dare to give it to him, I hastened to employ a skilful workman to imitate it. The same wood could not be found, but the gold plates, set a little closer, made this trifling difference imperceptible. I furnished it with every thing valuable which I thought could please M. de Sancerre. I made it an affair of choice, of secrecy, and I felt a true plea-

ſure in placing, with my own hands, this caſket in his cloſet. Alas! I did not foreſee that this fatal gift would open my eyes upon the character of a man whom, it was ſo important, I ſhould eſteem.

Careful to preſerve the favor of the Marſhal, in ceaſing to live under his view, M. de Sancerre did not appear to change his conduct; he did change it however, though none but myſelf could obſerve it. He continued to ſhew an extreme paſſion for me, to boaſt loudly of the graces of my perſon, of my talents, my mind, the evenneſs of my temper; to ſpeak every moment of the tenderneſs he took a pleaſure to inſpire, of the affectionate ſentiments he was happy to reciprocate; in accompanying me every where, he acquired the reputation of a ſenſible man, capable of deſpiſing ridiculous cuſtoms and acknowledging a reaſonable attachment. I heard the praiſes of my huſband repeated around me; they envied my lot; I offered to their view the image of a happy woman; I was ſurrounded with ſplendor; gold, and precious ornaments glittered about me; they admired my jewels, my equipage and my attendance; every thing was choſen by M. de Sancerre; his taſte and magnificence were ſurpriſing; but he refuſed me the trifles which excited my deſire; he demanded an account of the ſmall ſum deſtined for my amuſements; he obliged my women to tell him how it was employed; often did he condemn the purpoſe; my natural diſpoſition to charity and beneficence drew upon me reproaches or ridicule. The ſame apartment no longer ſubjected us to the neceſſity of ſeeing each other conſtantly; he came ſeldom into mine at thoſe hours when I was alone. Careſſed in public, in private neglected, my eyes were not opened; I did not place my happineſs upon thoſe proofs of love which my huſband by degrees ceaſed to give, but upon thoſe which he ſtill continued to beſtow. He followed me into all places; he held the moſt

flattering language; I thought myself beloved; and that coldness by which another would perhaps have been alarmed, did not destroy this delightful fancy. Why could I not always retain it? Why has chance taken it from me? Oh, my friend! it rendered me so happy!

One evening when M. de Sancerre had just set out for Versailles, the floor of his closet took fire; my servants, alarmed at the accident, hastened to remove all the most valuable furniture into my apartment. Returning from my sister's, where I had passed the evening, I found every thing in confusion; happily the fire was extinguished and the danger over, but as it was necessary to repair the floor and ceiling of M. de Sancerre's closet, I ordered several of the articles, which the workmen might injure by displacing, to be left in mine.

I was going to retire for the night, when I perceived upon my table a note sealed; the disorder of my servants had made them forget to tell me of it; it was from Madame de Cezanes; I read it; she entreated me to send her two diamond flowers, which she wished to get imitated. I called for my casket; they brought it to me; I opened it, and told Paulina, one of my women in waiting, to take out the flowers and send them the next day to Madame de Cezanes. Paulina searched a long time, turned over a number of papers, took out all the drawers, and exclaimed that she could not find my jewels: I looked myself, saw her mistake, and recollected immediately the casket of M. de Sancerre. I went into my own closet, took the flowers and gave them to her. As she received them from my hand, her paleness and distress struck my attention; still frightened by the accident of the evening, she appeared fatigued and sick. I felt little disposed to sleep, but not wishing to keep Paulina awake, I dismissed her. Before I took up my book, I thought it my duty to gather up the

papers of M. de Sancerre; I was going to shut his casket, when upon the fold of a letter, these words written with an underline, caught my eye and excited my curiosity, *I have permitted you to marry Adelaide.*

See at this part of my recital, my motive for having so long delayed opening to you my heart. Shall I dare, my dear Count, to send you a copy of this letter, to discover to you an odious mystery, a secret which it must mortify you to know? What a flattering prejudice am I going to destroy! Shall I name to you this woman whose astonishing art knew how to manage so many different interests, to fix so many happy lovers, to enslave those whom she sacrificed to her vanity, to enjoy their esteem, the veneration of a husband at the same time amused and betrayed, and under the veil of decency, of modesty, and even of religion, to deliver herself up to an unrestrained passion, expressed without shame and indulged at the expence of honor and humanity! It was not enough for this cruel woman to shut up from me the heart of M. de Sancerre; my happiness excited her jealousy; she desired, she exacted, that my husband should give me proofs of neglect, of hatred. My friend, my indiscreet friend, why do you oblige me to tell you that Madame de Cezanes, your relation, she whom, for several years, you have thought to possess the *most innocent affections*, whose memory you have cherished and is still dear to you, was the most false, most base and despicable of all creatures.

Pardon, my dear Count, pardon these hard epithets; resentment does not dictate them to me. Time, other ideas, have removed the emotions of hatred which Madame de Cezanes excited. I have had it in my power to avenge myself on her, and I am contented to have inspired her with the fear. After her death, why should I destroy a reputation acquired and preserved by so much artifice? Why should I

put to the bluſh her huſband, her brothers, why afflict her friends? I have reſiſted the deſire to juſtify myſelf, becauſe it was impoſſible to do it without wounding the feelings of thoſe who were attached to this woman. The relations of M. de Sancerre, his friends, himſelf and Madame de Cezanes, have dared to attack my *temper* only, which they called *difficult, inflexible.* At my return to the world, it would have been trifling, childiſh indeed, to recollect what had paſſed. Others ſcarcely remember it, and every day it wears away from my memory; perhaps it is too much effaced. Adieu; this letter is becoming too large; the firſt poſt ſhall bring you the remainder.

The SEQUEL.

I often ſaw Madame de Cezanes; it was with a ſort of repugnance which her feigned auſterity would naturally inſpire in a woman of my age. M. de Sancerre obliged me to cultivate the acquaintance which he had given me, and his intimate connection with the Marquis de Cezanes induced me to conceal the diſlike which I had to a ſociety ſo very grave and tireſome.

I recollected the writing of Madame de Cezanes; the ſingularity of this expreſſion, *I have permitted you to marry Adelaide*, made me wiſh to read the letter on which I obſerved it. I give you here an exact copy:——

The letter of the MARCHIONESS DE CEZANES to M. DE SANCERRE.

I wish neither to see you, nor hear from you; how often must I repeat it to you? You cannot justify yourself; your presumptuous falsehoods impose upon me no longer. You have deceived me. I know it; it is certain. You are perfidious; I hate you; I despise you; I renounce you; I leave you forever. All your excuses are

revolting; I have permitted you to marry Adelaide; *you repeat to me that I have* permitted *you. Ah! how much ingratitude there is in this kind of reproach! What! did not your uncle exact this fatal marriage? Was it then that I should sacrifice to your interests the happiness of possessing you alone, that I should offer up the whole pleasure of my life for the advancement of your fortune, was this, to give you the right to betray me? the right to abandon yourself to a foolish passion which a child inspires? to abuse my favors, my condescension? to break your vows? to tear from me an enjoyment so dearly bought? to abandon me to the furies of jealousy? finally to expose me to lose in a moment, in the violence of my transports, the reputation which I have, by so much constraint, so much self-denial, acquired, the respect which I merited, without doubt, before an ungrateful wretch had led away my reason and triumphed over all my principles?*

I have permitted you to marry Adelaide; *but have I permitted you to give her a heart which I flattered myself was wholly mine? You* do not love Madame de Sancerre, *you do not* love her, *you say. Ah! why then do you follow her every where, why speak of her incessantly?—why dare you repeat before me that she is* beautiful! amiable! interesting!——*Faithless man! is Adelaide then my rival? Does she divide—to divide is too little for her, does she then engross a heart——Ah! can I live and think that another pleases you, attracts, interests you? What! is the idea of another always present to you?—always! when you are in my company, perhaps——But let us dismiss this doubt, it is cruel, it leads to despair.*

Ah! what is then so interesting *in this young and timid creature? Is it her* modesty, *so country-like, which enchants you? her* regular, delicate *features, which have no animation? a* coldness *which must proceed in a measure from the inactivity of her mind? her* large eyes, *in which the desire of pleasing is never shewn?—a*

childish softness, *an ill-judged* kindness, *a tiresome* evenness *of temper? These are the* simple graces, *the* deceitful charms *which seduce you, which draw you after the footsteps of Madame de Sancerre, which make her appear so* interesting *in your view. Ah! since when has coldness and simplicity had power to charm you?*

In consenting to your marriage, I thought to bind you as much by gratitude as you then were by love. How many tears has it forced me to shed! During this long residence at the house of the Marshal de Tende, what have I not suffered! With how many griefs has my soul felt itself penetrated! But I shut my eyes upon your conduct, upon your necessary prudence; I did not complain, I contented myself with the few moments which the deluded Adelaide assisted you to give me; but at present what obliges you to pass whole days and nights with her?—Yes, days and nights! with what audacity did you presume to disown me at my brother's! you immediately took your leave, Madame de Sancerre remaining; convinced of your imposture, transported by my rage, indeed out of my senses, I questioned her, she blushed; I insisted, she cast down her eyes; her confusion betrayed you. I persisted with some obstinacy in drawing from her this confidence; she blushed again, embarrassed herself, hesitated, admitted, confessed——Indeed you are odious to me, I detest you! Your character is false, your mind trifling, your heart inconstant; I repeat it to you, I wish no more to see you. I will break every tie which has held me to an ingrate. Come not this evening, come no more, never come.

P. S. I change my idea, without changing my resolution. Many reasons induce me to speak with you once more. I give you a moment, a single moment—Come instantly.

During the perusal of this letter, my surprise, my trouble, the violent emotion of my senses, and the affliction of my heart, were inexpressible. I thought

myself agitated by a revolting and painful dream. Trembling, I compared the note of Madame de Cezanes with the letter. I saw the same character; the date apprised me that she had written it a short time after my departure from Tende-house; I recollected the bold questions of Madame de Cezanes; I remembered her obstinate perseverance in interrogating me at the house of her brother; a train of observations led me to think that since this day my answers, less embarrassing to me, had without doubt been less provoking to her.

I replaced the fatal casket; I went away from it; in a moment I returned. Without reflection, I immediately took up another letter, and forced myself to read them all.

You will accuse me of imprudence; yet this indeterminate, pressing inclination, which hurries us to seek into the most afflicting secrets, to examine to the bottom, to see all, to know all, does not perhaps arise, as would be supposed, from an ardent, indiscreet curiosity; but from a faint hope concealed within the heart; a hope which is nourished, supported, animated by doubt. Ah! who could desire a sorrowful certainty, an overwhelming conviction? It seemed to me that I could lose mine in pursuing my researches; I imagined that some one of the letters would destroy the cruel impression which the first had made.

Violent jealousy, selfish, imperious passion, an unrepressed ardor, were painted throughout these bold, presumptuous letters. I was often named, always with disdain, always with contempt; I was fortunate, however, in being so much favored by nature, that the railleries of Madame de Cezanes fell only upon my youth, my little experience, and my credulity!

Among several boxes which contained some portraits of Madame de Cezanes, I recollected one of

them, I had given it to M. de Sancerre, and upon his aſſurance, I believed it to be loſt. The ſight of it made me ſtart; I opened it with fear, with trembling; I flattered myſelf, however, that I ſhould find in it my own picture; that of Madame de Cezanes preſented itſelf to my view; it pierced my heart with unſpeakable grief. Until this inſtant, my ſurpriſe, the trouble of my mind, had ſuſpended my reflexions. My ideas were now collected, were fixed on Madame de Cezanes. The imperious miſtreſs of my huſband ſeemed alone to excite the terrible emotions with which I felt myſelf agitated. My picture, removed from this box, brought back my thoughts upon M. de Sancerre. I ſaw myſelf ſacrificed, hated, neglected; my tears began to flow, to bathe the ſad proofs of the intelligence of two faithleſs perſons. Fallen backward on my ſeat, my hands claſped together, my head bowed down, I was giving myſelf up to all the bitterneſs of my thoughts, when my door was ſuddenly opened, and M. de Sancerre entered with precipitate ſtep. At ſight of him I ſcreamed; he approached, ſaw his caſket in diſorder, his papers ſcattered around me, his ſecret diſcovered; he was chaffed with rage; fury was pictured upon his countenance, in his angry looks. I trembled, a deadly chill ran through all my ſenſes; I made an effort, I wiſhed to eſcape his preſence; my heart was overcome; I fell ſenſeleſs at the feet of M. de Sancerre.

Returning from a long ſwoon, the firſt object which offered itſelf to my ſight was the Marſhal de Tende. He was ſeated near me, ſtill penetrated with the fear of ſeeing me relapſe into thoſe fainting fits which, he ſaid, had quickly ſucceeded one another ſince the preceding evening until the middle of the day; he was alarmed at my condition; he held my hands between his, he preſſed them tenderly—Ah! my daughter, cried this good, this venerable man,

and what a ſtrange accident! who has cauſed it? Your paleneſs, your dejection, the air with which you liſten to me, your ſighs, your tears, the name of your huſband ſorrowfully repeated during the ſhort intervals of your weakneſs, announce to me a myſtery; I wiſh to develop it. Ordering all my women to leave the room, he interrogated me, he conjured me to anſwer him. Has Sancerre cauſed theſe tears to flow? Is it he who has afflicted you to this exceſs? Speak, ſaid he, ſpeak, my dear niece, conceal nothing from me, you owe a confidence to the ſentiment which engages me to aſk you.

The kindneſs of the Marſhal, his tenderneſs, the certainty of being beloved by him, opened my heart to the deſire, ſo natural, of complaining, of exciting an affectionate compaſſion by the recital of one's grief. I threw myſelf into the arms of this ſenſible and reſpectable friend; my tears ſtreamed afreſh; I wiſhed to ſpeak; my cries, my groans, ſtifled my voice. Sancerre, repeated I, alas! Sancerre! Ah! indeed, what has he done, demanded the Marſhal with warmth—In uniting you with him, I have promiſed, I have ſworn to watch over your intereſts, your happineſs, to protect you againſt him. Has he failed in the regard which he owes you on ſo many accounts? Does he neglect you? Does he offend you? You weep; you are ſilent, Madame; Ah! what, dare you not be ſincere with a relation, with a friend whoſe juſtice is known to you, whoſe attachment to you, you cannot doubt? Do you not remember that I have reſerved to myſelf the right to puniſh the Count de Sancerre, if his conduct ſhould give you juſt cauſe of complaint.

Theſe laſt expreſſions of the Marſhal recalled to my memory what he had ſaid to his nephew at the moment of ſigning our marriage articles. I recollected the two wills, one of which rendered me the heir of the Marſhal; in ſpeaking to him I was going

to revolt againſt M. de Sancerre; to draw his fortune upon myſelf alone, to reduce my huſband to depend upon a woman whom he did not love; the more it ſhould be in my power to oblige him, the more perhaps he would hate me. This reflection wounded my ſoul; it took from me the conſolation of pouring my griefs into the boſom of my only friend, of my generous protector; it drew from me a ſhriek of diſtreſs: mournful exclamations, long ſighs, were the only expreſſions of my heart. In ſubſtituting me to the rights of my huſband, they had forever taken from me the power to accuſe him, or to make my complaints againſt him.

The Marſhal was ſtill preſſing me to give him more confidence, when, according to his orders, they came to announce the arrival of his nephew from Verſailles. He aroſe to go and meet him; but the Count de Sancerre prevented it; he appeared at the door of my chamber; pale and ſilent he ſlowly advanced; his looks wandered upon his uncle and upon me—He ſought to read in our eyes the reception he was to expect. Emboldened by the firſt words of the Marſhal; confident that he was ſtill ignorant of the adventure of the night, he threw himſelf upon his knees before my bed, took my hands, kiſſed them a thouſand times, queſtioned my attendants, made them recount all the particulars of my accident, interrupted the ſhort recital by marks of the greateſt compaſſion. Paulina told him that being awaked by the ſound of my bell, ſhe immediately ran and found me cold, inanimate, my face and boſom bathed in tears. M. de Sancerre could interrogate her without fearing her anſwers. Having left my chamber before ſhe had entered it, his precaution had placed him beyond the reach of any ſuſpicion.

Chance had not brought him into this chamber at that unuſual hour. A ſervant of Madame de Cezanes, in bringing her note to my houſe, had ſeen

the fire in the cloſet of M. de Sancerre. The Count had left Verſailles in the evening immediately after the king retired; he arrived at the houſe of his miſtreſs, and was there informed of the accident. Anxious about his papers, he haſtened to Tendehouſe; finding his cloſet half unfurniſhed, knowing his caſket to be in mine, he determined to enter ſoftly, to croſs my chamber without waking me, and reſume this important caſket; but liſtening a moment at my door, hearing me weeping and groaning, he opened it as I have told you. He left me fainting, called up my women, took his caſket and left the houſe, forbidding the ſervants ever to ſay that he had appeared there this night. He was exactly obeyed, and I never knew this detail until long after his death.

The air of diſtreſs which M. de Sancerre affected in enquiring the cauſe of ſo ſurpriſing a revolution, his attentions, the ingenuity of his queſtions, his aſſurance in repeating them, inſenſibly led me to recollect myſelf, in order to be aſſured that I was not deceived, that a fantaſtic dream did not trouble my imagination; to be certain whether the man who was giving me ſo many proofs of tenderneſs, was really the lover of Madame de Cezanes, or the affectionate huſband whoſe paſſion appeared ſo natural, ſo lively.

The diſſimulation of M. de Sancerre ſucceeded. He repeated ſeveral times that my faintings muſt have proceeded from an emotion of fear, excited by the diſorder of my ſervants, by an exaggerated recital of the danger: the Marſhal believed him, and left me, being perſuaded that his nephew had no part in occaſioning the condition from which they had juſt relieved me. M. de Sancerre accompanied him; but returning immediately, his countenance and tone changed; Madame, ſaid he, my imprudence and your indiſcreet curioſity, have put into your hands

the reputation of a lady that is reſpected, and the fortune of a man of whom you may complain, You had reaſon to think yourſelf beloved; you have juſt diſcovered that a connection formed before I knew you, before my eyes were opened upon your charms, did not permit me to give you a heart which was pre-engaged. They impoſed upon me my marriage with you, a conſtraint which has rendered my firſt tie more dear. I will not flatter you with the promiſe of a ſacrifice which I have no intention to make to you. I will not humble myſelf to entreat you, to demand of you ſecrecy; in vain might you promiſe to keep the ſecret, intereſts, too powerful, induce you to reveal it; did a woman ever reſiſt the pleaſure of avenging herſelf; Tell, Madame, tell; irritate the Marſhal; deſtroy Madame de Cezanes; take away my eſtate; but in deſtroying my happineſs, be ſure you improve your own. Expect from me the ſevereſt proofs of my diſdain, of my hatred and reſentment. I will ſpread a bitterneſs over all the moments of your life. The behaviour of Madame de Cezanes ſhall regulate mine in regard to you; whatever ſhe will dare to do againſt a woman ſhe conſiders as her rival, that will I dare againſt you. Ah! how much have I to manage! Rage on, imprudent girl; but tremble; know that you have to dread the ſame lot which you are preparing for her who is dear to me. It ſhall be yours; I ſwear it by all that is ſacred, by every thing which is revered. In finiſhing his ſpeech, he aroſe, and was proceeding towards the door,; I extended my arms towards him; I called out to him in a weak but tender voice, ah! do not avoid me, ſir, do not avoid me, I cried, do not hate me; I will be ſilent; I will reſpect this dreadful ſecret; never, never ſhall my lips be opened to injure or afflict you. He did not liſten to me, but went out haſtily without giving any anſwer.

He had ſcarcely left my chamber, when one of my women preſented me ſome papers which had fallen from my boſom while they were undreſſing me. I ſaw with ſurpriſe this letter of Madame de Cezanes, of which you have juſt read the copy; it was wrapped in the note which had ſerved me to verify the writing. My firſt inclination was to ſend for M. de Sancerre, to put it again into his hands; but intimidated by the fear of further exciting his wrath, of hearing him threaten me, of hearing him ſpeak to me with that harſhneſs which had juſt wounded my heart ſo grievouſly, I did not dare to do it. I locked up theſe papers; how often ſince have I read over this letter! how often have my tears flowed in repeating theſe cruel expreſſions: *You do not love Madame de Sancerre, you do not love her, you say?*

In the evening they perceived that I had an ardent fever; violent tranſports bereft me for ſeveral days of my ſenſes. When I began to diſtinguiſh objects, I ſaw my ſiſter, the Marſhal de Tende, Madame de Flers his relation, and M. de Sancerre: they appeared to be very attentive around me; I regarded them in ſilence; my confuſed ideas were not yet fixed upon any thing; I was ſad, without being occupied by the occaſion of my ſadneſs. The ſight of thoſe by whom I thought myſelf beloved, affected me tenderly; the ſmalleſt kindneſs intereſted me; that of Sancerre gave me the livelieſt joy; I repeated with emotion every thing mild and conſoling which he ſaid to me; the ſound of his voice enchanted me; if he took my hand, I ſeized his, I raiſed it to my forehead, to my lips: I brought it near to my boſom, I preſſed it to my heart. My eyes followed all his ſteps, and when he was about to leave me, they were filled with tears.

During this ſort of infancy, I was always ſtruck with fear. When a lady entered my room, I ſhewed immediate marks of terror, I covered my face, and

would not consent to look at her before she had spoken. In listening to her, I examined her with a stupid, fearful air; her presence disturbed me, afflicted me. With what art, with what malice did M. de Sancerre dare afterwards to repeat to the Marshal that this was the wandering of a mind pre-engaged, of a lively imagination, a tender heart deeply wounded. How well did he know in what manner to derive an advantage from these emotions, the cause of which he perfectly understood!

He sat out for the army before my recovery, which was long and troublesome. In proportion as my ideas became more distinct, my sadness augmented. The assurance that I was no longer beloved, the despair of being able to interest a heart which was given to another, which was forever shut against me, a heart-rending jealousy, always the same, the torture of which was not even varied by any painful doubt and uncertainty, the necessity of concealing my griefs, of being silent as to their cause, all rendered my condition lamentable, my reflections bitter and distressing. The selfish disposition of my sister did not permit me to seek a consolation in her friendship: the discovery of M. de Sancerre's secret might double my fortune, and give Madame de Thore the prospect of a very considerable reversion for her children, too powerful an inducement, for her, to betray my confidence. Following the sole inspirations of my own mind, I fought in my principles, in my reason, in the indulgence which I owed to M. de Sancerre, means to subject my heart, to forget my rights, to yield my affection, all my sentiments, to the tender pleasure of reclaiming an ungrateful man by the force of these same sentiments which I was willing to sacrifice to him. Was he then still dear to me? Oh! my friend! offended love retains a long time all its ardor; it seems to gather new life from every occasion by which it is wounded; grief does

not abate its activity, and in a heart of sensibility which is noble, generous, neglect alone can weaken and extinguish it.

During my illness Madame de Cezanes had made a journey into the country. They expected her in Paris about the middle of the autumn. Determined never to see her again, but careful not to shew any rupture between her and me, I resolved to receive no company whatever at my house. I announced my intention of applying closely to the studies I had lately begun, in which I did not wish to be interrupted, and my door was no longer open to any but my own relations and those of M. de Sancerre.

Madame de Cezanes was ignorant of the discovery of her intrigue; I received several letters from her, and answered none of them. Having returned to Paris, she came to see me, and like others was not received; she complained bitterly of this to M. de Sancerre. Far from acknowledging my moderation, he partook of the resentment of his mistress; his ingratitude, his cruel injustice made me revolt at last, and occasioned this separation which has been so much and so differently spoken of.

The end of the campaign brought M. de Sancerre back to Paris. He appeared before me with a free and open air; he did not object to my retreat; he did not ask the motives which induced it. In the first few days, it might have been said that nothing had ever interrupted our harmony; his conduct became the rule of mine; no expression ever escaped him that tended to recall an event which must have been so much the subject of our reflections; I seemed to have forgotten it: Soon however did M. de Sancerre shew me more coldness. A painful restraint upon myself, made me repress those emotions which might discover my tenderness, and offend by an ap-

pearance of importunity. By degrees I beheld myſelf in my own houſe, a ſtranger, treated with indifference, but with politeneſs. Time, reſignation and habit, had indeed ſoftened my diſtreſs, or perhaps diminiſhed my ſenſibility; but M. de Sancerre exacted too much; it became neceſſary to prove to him that if I could reſtrain a juſt reſentment, preſerve, by my ſilence, the reputation of a woman unworthy of my regard, keep a ſecret important to the intereſts of a man of whom I had ſo much cauſe to complain, this reaſonable kindneſs, compatible with honor, did not render me capable of a baſe condeſcenſion. Theſe delicate diſtinctions do not ſtrike every mind; my huſband thought to inſpire me with fear, to owe my ſilence to his menaces; ah! how generous ſhould he have thought me! Did he know what kindneſs was? My friend, I will permit myſelf to ſay it, his heart was not capable of judging mine.

M. de Sancerre from his early youth had ſtudied to diſguiſe his thoughts, to appear different from himſelf; without principle, without a ſoul, ſelfiſh, falſe, ungrateful, diſſimulation and artifice were the only qualities which he thought neceſſary to acquire and perfect. Obſtinate in his fancy, conſtant in his vices, myſterious in his ſteps, he loved to create miſchief, to embroil friends, relations, married perſons, to penetrate ſecret intrigues, to make them public; fond of oſtentation yet avaricious, he ſhewed himſelf liberal and magnificent when a thouſand witneſſes could obſerve his actions; but never were his hands opened in ſecret for the ſolace of the unfortunate. Incapable of a ſtrong attachment, if he loved Madame de Cezanes a long time, it was rather from the weakneſs of his mind than from true paſſion; he ſacrificed nothing to his love, or at leaſt he ſacrificed to it nothing but my happineſs and his duties. This portrait perhaps aſtoniſhes you; but be aſſured it is faithfully drawn, I ſhould reproach myſelf for

altering a ſingle feature; the death of M. de Sancerre, time, my real ſentiments, have made me capable of the greateſt impartiality in regard to his character.

Two months had paſſed ſince his return, when a very trifling cauſe animated Madame de Cezanes againſt me, excited her malice, her fury, and led M. de Sancerre to tear from me in the moſt cruel manner the eſteem and friendſhip of the Marſhal de Tende, the only ſolace of my life, the only conſolation of my afflicted heart.

On leaving my apartment one morning for a moment, I met the Marquis de Cezanes, who was going to ſee M. de Sancerre. I could not avoid ſtopping a moment to ſpeak with him. This good and reſpectable man complained much of my long retreat, of my reſerve towards the Marchioneſs, whoſe friendſhip, he ſaid, was ſo much to be valued; he expatiated upon the goodneſs of her character, her well known merit, and wondered how I could refuſe to ſee her, to ſhut my door againſt her!

While he was ſpeaking, it was with difficulty I could conceal the violence of my emotions; this huſband, ſo prepoſſeſſed, ſo baſely deceived, inſpired me with the tendereſt compaſſion; perhaps a reflection upon myſelf rendered it more lively. I ſighed, and could not refrain from ſhedding tears; he was ſurpriſed and affected. M. de Sancerre coming to meet him, diſcovered much uneaſineſs; I perceived it, and in order to remove his fears, I haſtened to tell the Marquis that whenever I ſhould again appear in ſociety, Madame de Cezanes would by no means be neglected; at preſent, added I, the diſpoſitions of my mind lead me to cheriſh my retreat, to enjoy the amuſements it procured me, and I ought to flee from a world into which I ſhould introduce perhaps the ſadneſs and ennui with which it inſpires me.

My expreſſions being related to Madame de Cezanes, excited ſtrange ſuſpicions in the uneaſy and paſſionate heart of this woman. *I ſhould cherish my retreat, enjoy its amuſements!* and what amuſements could it procure me, if M. de Sancerre did not give them? This reflection was an inſupportable one to her. She obſerved M. de Sancerre; he appeared to her leſs eager in his attentions, leſs ardent; ſhe was aſtoniſhed not to have remarked ſooner his coolneſs; ſhe thought he was altered ſince his laſt journey and my long illneſs. It occurred to her that the heart of my huſband, when he ſaw me languiſhing in ſickneſs, had awakened to compaſſion, to repentance, perhaps to love! yes without doubt he loved me, he adored m , he obliged me to live for him alone; a ſentiment of jealouſy induced him to withdraw me from every eye. An *unfaithful man*, he kept her from his houſe to avoid her *juſt reproaches;* he fled from the complaints of a woman *betrayed, ſacrificed* to the ſhame of avowing a ridiculous inclination to which he yielded. You may read twenty letters from Madame de Cezanes in which theſe ſame expreſſions, and others ſtill ſtronger, are a hundred times repeated.

Had M. de Sancerre been more honeſtly diſpoſed, he would have preferred an avowal of the truth to ſo many baſe artifices by which he conſtantly embarraſſed himſelf, in order to keep concealed from Madame de Cezanes that I had diſcovered their intimacy; determined to calm her mind, to deſtroy her ſuſpicions, he took a route more difficult and leſs ſure. He ſwore to her that he would oblige me to appear again in public, to ſee her again, and give her the opportunity to notice his conduct and mine.

But how was he to bring me to this complaiſance? He could not demand it without expoſing himſelf to long conteſts, without riſking the loſs of my forbearance, without irritating my ſpirit, and incurring

the danger of losing at once the fruit of his constraint and dissimulation. My extreme readiness to acquiesce in the wishes and advice of the Marshal de Tende induced him to employ his mediation; but what a vile artifice was it to serve him! My friend, I enter with regret into these details; it gives me pain to retrace the baseness of a man who was so dear to my heart.

M. de Sancerre affected sadness in the presence of his uncle. He shewed himself thoughtful, uneasy, and afflicted with a secret sorrow. The Marshal soon interested himself in observing this change of temper; he desired to know the cause; he pressed M. de Sancerre to open to him his heart; yielding by degrees to his entreaties, exciting his curiosity by artful discourses, M. de Sancerre had at last the audacity to accuse me of being the cause of all his griefs, of all the bitterness of his life. He unfolded to him what he called the mystery of my conduct; he represented it as the effect of an insupportable caprice; he complained of my temper, which, he said, was by nature uneasy and difficult, nothing could soften its asperity, his very complaisances increased it; he painted me suspicious, distrustful, hating women, avoiding them, fleeing from them, wishing to banish them from my house; jealous of them all, thinking them all dangerous rivals. Among those who excited my fears, he even dared to name Madame de Cezanes; he had the impudence to add to his odious imputations, the ridicule of a jealousy so ill founded. My ill health, the fright which the presence of a woman had given me, my tears, my perseverance in remaining alone in the depth of my apartment, my continual languor, all were attributed to this devouring inquietude; this poisoned my happiness; this created the affliction of a *tender heart* by which I was *passionately beloved!*

A train of complaints, of deceptions, of intrigues, imposed at length upon the Marshal, and persuaded

him that I had indeed made his nephew very unhappy. He believed him ſincere, ſenſible, generous; how could he have doubted him? He obſerved that ſince the return of M. de Sancerre, my ſadneſs was not diminiſhed. I had leſs converſation with him; his preſence no longer diffuſed upon my countenance either intereſt or pleaſure. If he accoſted me with an air of kindneſs, if he addreſſed me in a flattering language, my emotions expreſſed rather a character of ſurpriſe, than of gratitude or friendſhip. M. de Sancerre added ſeveral particulars to theſe remarks of the Marſhal, and in order to excite his compaſſion ſtill further, he feigned to reproach himſelf for having made an avowal which might diſtreſs ſo affectionate a friend: he ought to have been ſilent, he ſaid; he ought never to have given him the uneaſineſs to know that a lady received from his hands, with ſo much confidence in his choice, with ſuch a hope of finding his happineſs with her, far from fulfilling his juſt expectations, ſeemed deſtined to trouble his repoſe, to diſtreſs him inceſſantly, to embitter all the comforts of his life, and finally to deprive him of his greateſt ſatisfaction, that of adding to and partaking of hers.

The Marſhal, too true himſelf not to believe the repreſentations of another, when made under ſuch an appearance of ſincerity, felt himſelf deeply affected by the complaints of his nephew. The ſilence which I had obſerved as to the cauſe of my diſquiet, gave a probability to the accuſations of M. de Sancerre; jealouſy, an active and gloomy paſſion, often deſpiſed, always hated, is ever accompanied with fear and ſhame; one is offended at being thought to have inſpired it,—to ſhew a feeling and reſentment of it brings a bluſh. If my tears had flowed from any other cauſe, how could I have refuſed myſelf the indulgence of complaining?

The Marſhal aſſured M. de Sancerre that his confidence ſhould be received with a profound ſe-

crecy; he promiſed to lead me from this retired life, ſo little becoming my age, that I ſhould return at his entreaty to the company of all thoſe whom an unfortunate caprice had led me to avoid; that he would himſelf conduct me to the houſe of Madame de Cezanes; ſo *respectable* a lady merited the greateſt regard. My gentleneſs of diſpoſition, my attachment to my duties, my tender friendſhip for him whom I called my father, would ſoon reſtore me to the world and to myſelf. He thought ſo; ah! my dear Count, he had good reaſon to think ſo! Why was I under the cruel neceſſity of fruſtrating his expectations, of wounding his heart by my refuſal, of appearing to want that reſpect, that veneration which he inſpired! How much have I lamented the occaſion of a diſobedience ſo revolting in his eyes!

It was at firſt by all the attentions of friendſhip that the Marſhal undertook to reclaim my mind. As I did not underſtand his firſt inſinuations, I knew not how to anſwer them. His entreaties that I would change my conduct not determining me, he became urgent; the little ſucceſs of his ſolicitations irritated him; he had that vivacity, that ſort of quickneſs which commonly characteriſes extreme candor; his impatience, his anger, made him one day forget the ſecrecy he had promiſed to M. de Sancerre. His complaints, his reproaches, diſcovered to me the contemptible artifice of my huſband.

The duplicity of M. de Sancerre, his ingratitude, his baſeneſs, made my heart revolt. In my indignation I roſe up precipitately, I made a ſtep towards my cloſet, tempted, ſtrongly tempted, to deliver up to the Marſhal the letter of Madame de Cezanes, this *friend*, of whoſe virtues he ventured to boaſt ſo much, whom he preſſed me to ſee again, to love! My weakneſs for the ungenerous Count, a little reflection, changed this firſt intention.

In giving me new cauſe of complaint, M. de Sancerre had abuſed my goodneſs; but had he deſtroyed the principle which directed it? Should I not repent a diſcloſure? Can a generous heart reliſh long the ſatisfaction of revenge? In breaking ſilence, I might regain the intereſt of the Marſhal; he would puniſh M. de Sancerre; he would reſtore to me his confidence, his friendſhip; but could he reſtore me my firſt condition, the charms of my former ſtate? Could he give me again the heart of my huſband? Ah! even if he could induce him to abandon his favorite, to treat me with more regard, would his return, whether feigned or ſincere, promote my happineſs? Alas! I had too well examined M. de Sancerre, I knew his character too well, to hope ever to be happy with him, or by his attentions.

While occupied by theſe ideas, dumb, ſilent, bewildered, my confuſion and my bluſhes ruined me in the mind of the Marſhal, gave force to the accuſations M. de Sancerre had made to him, and confirmed his error. He was going to withdraw from me his affection; what conſolation would then be left me? Oh! my dear Count, the moſt mournful moment of life is that in which we look around in deſpair of meeting the eye of a friend.

I was ſilent; I ſighed; my tears flowed abundantly. The prejudice of the Marſhal had ſhut his heart againſt compaſſion; he demanded the prompteſt obedience, and directed me to name the day when I would conſent to accompany him to the houſe of Madame de Cezanes. Ah! never, never, cried I, if my life depended on this ſhameful ſtep, I would not take it. This explicit refuſal drew upon me the hardeſt epithets. Deranged, viſionary, blinded by a ſilly paſſion, the odioufneſs of which could not be indulged a place in ſociety, I had become inſupportable to my relations, to the moſt complaiſant of huſbands.

Thus did I prove to what an extent reaſon and kindneſs could be altered by an impulſe of wrath.

The Marſhal left my chamber in anger; but returning in a moment, Madam, ſaid he, you ſhall open your houſe to thoſe whoſe rank and merit entitle them to admittance, or go into a convent, where you may deliver yourſelf up to all the extravagant imaginations which your wandering mind is pleaſed to indulge. I give you one month to make your choice.

So ſevere a quarrel, ſuch unkind expreſſions, ſo mortifying an alternative, brought my griefs to the very exceſs, and took from me all power of expreſſion. From this time I was only to be ſeen in a flood of tears, ſunk down in my diſtreſs; I became incapable of appearing in the world to which they wiſhed to lead me again. The moſt trifling attention, a ſimple queſtion upon the ſubject of my illneſs, of my diſtreſs, brought from me the moſt bitter cries. The dreadful diſſimulation of M. de Sancerre excited my ſtrongeſt indignation. Always affectionate, always anxious in his attentions in the preſence of thoſe few who ſaw us together, how could he be ſuſpected of being the author of my troubles? The ſentiment of contempt which his affected ſympathy inſpired, diſplayed itſelf in my countenance, often in my expreſſions; ſoon was it ſaid that I hated him; for this I became a ſubject of complaint, of cenſure; ſuch an averſion was unnatural, the cauſe of it was ſought after and traced to the alteration of my reaſon; ſo profound a ſadneſs, ſuch an unjuſt hatred could proceed only from a derangement of my mind.

Without advice, without friends, abandoned to my own reflections, I ſaw the time paſs which had been fixed for me to declare my choice. I ſhould have been willing to gratify the Marſhal, perhaps M. de Sancerre, by every ſacrifice which would not have brought upon my heart a ſelf reproach; I could

have ſuffered an injury, I could have ſuffered affliction, but how could I debaſe myſelf, how yield, when decency and honor were concerned? The convent with which they threatened me, inſenſibly became the object of my moſt conſoling thoughts; in loſing the hope of happineſs we naturally reſt on that of repoſe; but would not this retreat appear to be forced? What! ſhall I leave it to be thought that M. de Sancerre had baniſhed me from his houſe? Preſently all my ideas turned towards Mondelis. Thoſe places where I had paſſed my earlieſt years in ſweet tranquillity, were painted to my imagination as the reſidence of peace; I flattered myſelf that I ſhould there find again the calm of my mind, the indifference of my heart. My friend, I deceived myſelf; this indifference is a bleſſing we cannot enjoy twice; we can never recover it in its full extent. When once we have loved, a painful, uneaſy feeling, a regret which I cannot deſcribe, unites with the certainty of no longer loving, and diſpoſes the heart to the danger of indulging the ſame affection again.

Solely occupied by the deſire of going to Mondelis, to fix there my reſidence, I ventured to reſolve upon the only expedient which could induce M. de Sancerre to comply with ſo ardent a wiſh; I thought myſelf at liberty to uſe, for once, an artifice, and to make the letter of Madame de Cezanes ſubſervient to the purpoſe of relieving me from the unfortunate ſituation into which this haughty woman had been pleaſed to reduce me. I was indeed far from meditating a baſe and cruel vengeance; but did my huſband know me ſufficiently not to be afraid? Perhaps by threatening it, by ſhewing myſelf ready to repel the inſult, I might ſucceed in freeing myſelf from his tyranny and oppreſſion. After mature deliberation I wrote to him, and enclo ſed a copy of the letter of Madame de Cezanes. In order that I might not leave him the hope of obliging me, by force, to

give up to him this proof of their correspondence, I went early in the morning to Trefnel, determined not to go from that place, if the answer of M. de Sancerre did not comport with my wishes. Here follows my letter.

The letter of MADAME DE SANCERRE to her HUSBAND.

Art and finesse are not a safe guide, sir; your conduct teaches me this. You risk too much in abusing my forbearance; while I have the power to destroy you, to avenge myself, you should recollect that there is a point beyond which generosity must yield to the necessity of a just defence, a moment when no further sacrifices can be made to the interest of a man capable of enjoying the greatest concessions without appreciating, without acknowleging them.

You have taken from me the only friend whose tenderness could support my fallen heart, you have prejudiced his mind; you have robbed me of his esteem, his protection; you have flattered yourself that he would no longer take notice of my distress, that he would no more regard my tears. You have rested secure in your artifices, without the smallest apprehension of my resentment. You wish to subject me to hard laws, to impose restraints upon me which my heart disdains; you would give to Madame de Cezanes the cruel pleasure of contemplating me in humiliation, in anguish, in abasement. Be assured, sir, you have deceived yourself. Irritated by her arrogance and your presumption, mistress of her reputation and of your fortune, I have it in my power to cover this woman with shame and confusion, and to deprive you at once of all the fruits you expect from your long hypocrisy, your base dissimulation. Too candid to conceal from you the extreme contempt with which your character has inspired me, I am going to express to you my mind without reserve. I will live with you no longer, sir; the daughter of Count Dammartin was not born to be your slave, to

submit to shameful condescensions! You may continue to enjoy the advantages which induced you to obtain from Madame de Cezanes permission to marry *me; you may dispose of my fortune; the rents of Mondelis, and the sum set apart for my amusements, will suffice for my expences. All my wishes are limited to this one of passing my days at this favorite spot, which is still my own; if you grant it, sir, I shall forget that a fatal tie has ever united us; without curiosity, without interest in your steps, I shall be in regard to you, as if no longer in being.*

In order to add some strength to my entreaty, I enclose herein the copy of a letter from Madame de Cezanes to yourself. The original of this letter you have lost; you may search for it in vain. Deposited by myself in very safe hands, your compliance or your refusal will determine the use which I shall make of it. If you hesitate, if you do not this day grant me my demand, tomorrow Mons. de Cezanes shall receive from me this proof of Madame de Cezanes' fidelity, and the Marshal de Tende will know which of us can with justice complain.

Having it in your power to prevent so sorrowful a discovery, you may invent the most plausible reasons for my residing at Mondelis; a perpetual silence in respect to Madame de Cezanes, to yourself, will permit you to charge me with the caprice of this separation; I shall never feel myself concerned in contradicting your false insinuations, provided they do never implicate my morals. I wait your answer; it shall regulate my conduct; I shall not leave this house without being informed of your intentions, holding myself ready to confirm my orders respecting the letter of Madame de Cezanes, or to revoke them, as your answer may give me occasion.

That I may not leave you any objections, I communicate to you the measures which I have already taken. This evening a consultation will be had on the weak state of my health; I shall resolve on a journey to Mondelis, there to breathe my native air; Madame de Flers will

leave Tresnel to accompany me. In living under the eye of your nearest relation, a respectable lady, dear to the Marshal de Tende, distinguished by all your family, I shall always appear dependent, sir, on you, and my residence at my own house will be regarded only as a consequence of the disgust which the world has given me for a long time past.

After having written this letter, I waited three hours in extreme agitation. I began to repent of the resolution I had taken; vague apprehensions, a sad inquietude was taking possession of my mind, when the following note was brought to me from M. de Sancerre.

You shall always be mistress, madam, of your steps; your goodness, your virtues, the attachment which you merit, the respect I have for you, must give you reason to hope every thing from my complaisance. In despair at being odious to you, afflicted by the part you are about to take, I dare not, however, oppose your wishes; I could never deprive myself of the pleasure of seeing you, if you did not positively declare that you wished to leave me. At all times, madam, on every occasion, I shall approve of whatever you may judge expedient, whatever may contribute to your repose, to the satisfaction of your life; you have the liberty to pursue those arrangements you have just communicated.

The consent, so much desired, softened the bitterness of my regrets. I hastened the preparations for my journey; I looked upon my departure as the termination of my griefs, the close of a passion so tender and unfortunate. I thought to lose at Mondelis the sentiment which forced me to retire there. I proved in my solitude that if absence ever lessen hatred, it often restores to love all its force. M. de Sancerre was called again to the army. His absence would permit me to pass several months at Mondelis, without exciting any suspicions in the mind of the Mar-

shal de Tende; nothing led him to consider this journey as the beginning of a perpetual separation between his nephew and me; he expected from it the return of my health and the calm of my mind. In order to avoid M. de Sancerre and his useless demonstrations of regret, I anticipated the time of my departure, and sat out without seeing him. On bidding adieu to the Marshal de Tende I gave myself up to the liveliest sorrow; I shall never see him again, repeated I to myself, with the most heartfelt distress; I am now to embrace him for the last time. The idea that I should entirely lose his esteem, that he must soon withdraw from me all his affection, came near to break my bursting heart. Ah! do not hate me, my father, never hate me, cried I, bathing his hands with my tears; I shall always love you, always respect you. With what pain did I tear myself from him! never can I recollect without bitterness how much I have afflicted him!

On the way I endeavoured to compose my mind and amused myself with the hope of becoming happy when I should reach Mondelis. My expectations were cruelly disappointed; this place, so dear to my infancy, presented nothing to my view but a vast desert. It mournfully recalled to my memory that tender mother whose kindness and attentions would have rendered this abode so agreeable. Ah! my dear Count! how much I need her counsels, her prudence! In a sorrowful, embarassing situation, what a consolation it is to follow the inspirations of an enlightened friend, interested in guiding us safely, in warding off those dangers which passion hurries us to overlook! what a misfortune it is to be delivered up to one's self, to doubt, to hesitate unceasingly, to dread the error of one's own ways, not to know what motives are attributed by others, what sentiments excited in their minds! Daring to consult no one, listening solely to the suggestions of my own heart, to my resentment;

I had thought that I could arm myself against M. de Sancerre by the letter which chance had left in my hands; by obſerving a ſilence in regard to his intrigue, the baſeneſs of his character, I thought to diſcharge all my engagements; perhaps, I owed him more. The bond of our union required, perhaps, an entire renunciation of my ſelf, my wiſhes and my will, a blind ſubmiſſion to his control. Perhaps my preſent conduct was not entirely free from reproach. But, my dear friend, what law of nature, of ſimple juſtice, can oblige two perſons to live together whoſe hearts are eſtranged? Why muſt the cruel yoke be for ever borne which however eaſy or indifferent it may be to one ſex, has become heavy and diſtreſſing to the other?

I ſtop here my ſad narrative; what remains to be told you is of little importance; I will write it, however, at my firſt leiſure. Adieu.

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LETTER XVII.

I HAVE received your two letters; they have diſſipated my inquietude. I am glad that I have not wounded your heart by a recital which I feared ſo much to give you; but what an acknowledgment, my dear Count! how many reflections does it produce in my mind! What! the falſhood of Madame de Cezanes, the indelicacy of her inclinations were known to you, and yet you loved her? Her death drew ſighs from you; made you ſhed tears? You ſtill ſpeak of her with tenderneſs, with regret! Oh, my God, if the tears of a good man are to honour the memory of a vile woman, what reward then ſhall virtue obtain? what hope ſhall ſupport its ſtruggles? what homage ſhall be rendered to modeſty, to candor? excepting M. de Sancerre, whoſe intimacy

took place during your residence at Malta, you knew, you say, all the *happy* lovers of this lady. Perhaps you were of the number! my friend, I would wish you not to regret such a woman; indeed you ought not. But I will resist for the present my desire to complain of you on this account, and proceed in the relation of what you call *my history*.

I will not fatigue you with a detail of my solitary life, or of the persecutions which I, for a long time, sustained. You know them. The Marshal de Tende, my sister, all those who thought they had any command over my mind, tried in vain to bring me back to Paris. Constant in my refusal, nothing could conquer my resistance. M. de Sancerre affected an excess of grief; he complained every where of being hated by a wife he adored; every one partook of his regret; the Marshal wished to console him for the misfortune of so unsuitable a match by the gift of all his fortune. Six months after he had assured all his estate to M. de Sancerre, he died, and among his relations he was sincerely regretted, perhaps, by her alone whose disobedience had excited his wrath and his hatred!

As the most extraordinary events occupy but a short attention of the world, which is ever eager after novelties, in the lapse of a year at Mondelis, I found myself forgotten by all the friends of M. de Sancerre, abandoned by my own, and reduced to the single friendship of Madame de Flers. In sympathising with me in the distress of my heart, she respected my secret; if my conduct in regard to M. de Sancerre did not appear to her to correspond with those sentiments of discretion and sensibility which she knew me to possess, she made no attempts to penetrate the mystery. It was from her I learned the secret history of Madame de Cezanes; the Countess de Flers possessed a very extensive detail of her amours. One of this lady's nephews who had been favoured

and betrayed by the Marchioness, had for a long time amused himself in taking notice of her steps; by the little arts which he well knew how to employ for this purpose, had collected proofs enough to fill a volume. Proud and vindictive, he had reduced his observations to a sort of memoir, with a view to spread a few copies among his friends. Madame de Flers prevented the dark revenge, and took possession of the manuscript. Many persons are named in it, but not a word is written of M. de Sancerre.

The uniformity of my life, the cares I have taken in embellishing my retreat, time, the contempt for my husband which his character gave me, the distance of all those objects which could continue a passion for which I blushed and was ashamed, the simple and sincere amusements of the country, had already calmed the agitations of my heart, when Madame de Martigues came to add the charms of her agreeable gaiety to the happy commencement of a life of peace so vainly to be sought for in the midst of the world. Believe me, my friend, they have in Paris the mere appearance of it only; no, I am not here as I was at Mondelis.

The Count de Martigues having retired from the court and the service, established then his residence at Montfernai, a seat contiguous to mine. But lately married, he was hastening to a pleasant retreat with the young and charming companion he had chosen. Monsieur de Meri, the uncle of Madame de Mirande and guardian of Mademoiselle de Marsei, in securing the fortune of his ward, thought to secure her happiness. He had just united her to a man of the world whose reserve of temper but little suited her pleasantry and sprightliness. With estimable qualities, solid virtues and real merit, Monsieur de Martigues pleased no one. The gravity of his countenance, the austerity of his principles, an exact, inflexible justice, which considered clemen-

cy as a weakneſs, a ſtern look, an imperious tone, a ſharpneſs in diſpute, prejudiced moſt perſons againſt him, and led them to avoid the man rather than examine him ſufficiently to know the integrity of his heart, and the correctneſs of his ſentiments.

You may imagine how the ſpirit and vivacity of Madame de Martigues accorded with the ſeriouſneſs of her huſband. Deprived of all the amuſements ſhe loved, contradicted in her taſte, in her ſmalleſt wiſhes, adored, yet held in conſtraint, can any one be aſtoniſhed at her averſion now to enter into new ties? The Count de Piennes wiſhes in vain to aſſure her againſt the danger of a ſecond engagement; ſlavery and a huſband are preſented together to her mind; it is not the levity with which they accuſe her, it is her own experience which renders her ſo difficult to be perſuaded.

Madame de Martigues, having been educated in the ſame abbey where the Counteſs de Flers had lived ſince her widowhood, came to ſee her at Mondelis; ſhe had thought me a very extraordinary woman; the unfavourable ſuggeſtions of thoſe who pretended to know me had, naturally enough, given her this impreſſion; ſhe was aſtoniſhed to find in me nothing ſo remarkable but my ſorrow and my gentleneſs. By degrees we became bound to each other by the moſt tender friendſhip. Monſieur de Martigues viſited us often; whenever he was going to be abſent for any ſhort time he left the counteſs at Mondelis; his death affected me; it happened two years before that of M. de Sancerre. Madame de Martigues, ſhewed the goodneſs of her heart by the proper reſpect ſhe paid to his memory. With freedom and with wealth at her command, ſhe went to Paris. I did not expect ever to ſee her again; but more ſolid in her friendſhip than I imagined, ſhe ſoon returned to Mondelis, bringing with her Madame de Mirande whom ſhe had juſt taken from the convent, wiſhing to withdraw her

from the researches and authority of Monsieur de Meri. A widow at eighteen, limited to a small and ill assured portion, without any other support than the tenderness of her uncle, Madame de Mirande, already attached to Termes, had refused a rich offer, and was exposing herself to be disinherited by the imprudent step which Madame de Martigues had advised.

The situation of this young and beautiful woman rendered her as interesting, as the sweetness of her temper and the charms of her mind were prepossessing. The ward of her uncle, educated with her, Madame de Martigues had loved her from her infancy; I was happy that she had chosen Mondelis for the asylum of her friend. You know that from this time we have never been separated. Madame de Martigues went and returned constantly from Paris to Mondelis; the pleasures, she was eager to taste, were often sacrificed to the satisfaction she took in proving to us her sincere friendship; but Madame de Mirande never left my retreat except when I did.

What shall I tell you further, my dear friend? After the death of Monsieur de Sancerre, you came to Paris; I appeared again in the world, and was received, I thought, with pleasure. I was but twenty-two; Madame de Flers, after passing three years with me, desired to return to the convent, there to deliver herself up entirely to the exercises of piety. You know the regret I feel at being separated from her; I often go to see her. My friend, I almost envy her the calm of her heart, her tranquil life; there are moments when I feel willing to forsake all and shut myself up with her. Are we not happy when we are in peace? Ah! you will say, are you not in peace! No, my dear Count, no indeed. I know not what weariness, what inquietude——— Adieu; burn all you have compelled me to write.

LETTER XVIII.

PARIS.

YOU have received the letter of the amiable Counteſs de Termes and that of her happy huſband. Madame de Martigues tells you all the amuſements, all the magnificence of Fere: I ſhall ſay nothing to you then of a celebration which was ſo long promiſed.

We arrived at the houſe of Madame de Comminges; the Marquis de Montalais was there, expecting us. Monſieur de Comminges having concealed him for a few moments, came firſt and aſked our permiſſion to introduce a gentleman from the country, his relation, a good kind of man, a little dull, indeed ſomewhat tireſome. Madame de Martigues began already to yawn; in ſeeing the Marquis preſented ſhe exclaimed with joy. The ſupper was very gay and lively; the time paſſed away unnoticed till at three we were reminded by the clock that it was very late.

The latter part of your letter admits of a ſingular interpretation. I ſuppoſe it was written without attention or deſign; I will read it, however, again.—What expreſſions have eſcaped your pen! You have not ſtudied the extent of their meaning; it would be ridiculous to ſuppoſe you had entertained ſuch ideas——You would really alarm me if I did not know the ſtate of my heart better than you think. *Troubled, agitated!* do you believe ſo? Have I appeared to you *troubled!* I? Like others I have felt paſſing diſguſt, a momentary ennui; does this merit *ſerious reflections?* My friend I wiſh to reflect no more; the more we think the more we are ſad.

Your remarks make me quite uneaſy; my ſtyle is more *grave*, my diſpoſition *changed*; the *inequality*

of my spirits leads you to *doubt the peace of my heart;* I have forbidden you, positively forbidden, to question me upon *the object of my sincere esteem;* how, what is it you would make me understand? Ah! when did I so *positively* forbid you? I do not remember any thing of it.

Two lines after you ask me what I think of Monsieur de Montalais. You are either crazy or you do not read my letters; I have already told you every thing concerning the Marquis which it is possible for me to tell; my sentiments in regard to him do not vary. I dislike finesse; I am sorry ever to see it practised; I should reproach myself for suspecting a friend of it.

Madame de Termes is over-run with company; she sends constantly for my assistance in her apartment; I am now called to receive and dismiss a crowd of her importunate visitors. Adieu, I am a little angry with you; but it shall not lessen my regard for you.

LETTER XIX.

WE have good reason to think it, to say so, Madame de Martigues is certainly inconsiderate, imprudent; she has so many crazy ideas, such extravagant projects! I am displeased with her, with somebody else, perhaps with my self.

Yesterday I went to see Madame de Martigues; I found her alone. After a moment's conversation she gave me a billet from Monsieur de Montalais. I have just received it, said she, read it, and see if he could possibly have expressed himself better? I take it, run it over, approve of it and return it. Madame de Martigues observes me steadily; *it is well written, you admit?* very well. An easy style? Yes. *How*

tender, how interesting! I interrupt her. I pass to another subject. *So indifferent, Madam?* how indifferent, you astonish me! what do you mean? *You will see nothing in this billet?* What should I see? *Why, that the Marquis is passionately in love, and deserves to be pitied.* In love! he in love? ah! with whom then? *Guess.* With yourself, without doubt. *Very good!* With Madame de Termes? *not at all.* With Madame de Themines? *no.* Ah! is it Madame de Thianges? *no indeed.* With Madame de Comminges? *Oh! my God, no.*

Tired of deceiving myself, I cease to ask any further. I call her little favourite, cares it, go to play with it. She becomes impatient, murmurs, quarrels with me, *Does so charming a man inspire nothing, not even curiosity? this is carrying insensibility to a blameable excess.* But softly, I replied, for she had become quite animated, speak a little more softly, and tell me how it is important for your friend that I should be informed of the inclinations of his heart? Why should I wish to know the object of his affections if that be the secret so long concealed? *Have you not discovered the secret?* No. *Ah! you do not tell the truth.* How? *Have you not read his heart? It is you whom he loves.* Me! *You.*

I remained speechless, astonished at this forward and indiscreet confidence. I felt my face reddening, I could not meet her eyes. Surprise and anger agitated me. Yes, anger! I was vexed at Madame de Martigues. Why did she betray her friend? Why did she embarrass me by so imprudent a declaration.

My silence rendered her uneasy. She spoke, answered her own questions, and at last resumed that mild and infantile tone which suits her so well. Taking both my hands with one of hers, and,

with the other, endeavouring to lift up my head; *Now, my friend, let us speak coolly; is not M. de Montalais of a charming figure?* I do not say the contrary. *Has he not worth?* A great deal. *Talents?* Yes. *Noble sentiments!* I grant it. *A regular conduct?* So it is said. *Much sincerity?* I believe it. *Does he not possess the esteem of every body?* assuredly. *Your own?* I confess it. *Why then, Madam, should his love offend you? Why should you reject the flattering idea of sharing it? of rendering happy a man so worthy of your heart and your hand? are the other offers, which you are pressed to accept, to be compared to this?*

Share his love, exclaimed I; have you forgotten, that he is..... *Married, you mean! His wife is a curious obstacle!* How? *He was forced to marry her.* Is that a reason?.... *She limps*, what of that? *She is ill-natured, learned, stupid* ..... But ..... *Ugly, pouting* ... But she is ..... *tiresome* .... But she is his wife. *Oh, indeed* .... What do you mean? *Yes, for a while, not for ever.* What an idea! *Idea, Madam*, added she, I do not speak at random; this woman has gotten her head turned in thinking of her heir: she will die soon, she has been told so. The poor Marquis has requested her to take care of her health; she will not listen to him; in six months we will be rid of her. Her leanness is extreme, she coughs, faints; she cannot live long; she will die soon, I know it; I am sure of it. My physician, who is also hers, tells me so. She will never get better, I answer for it.

What levity! what inconsequence! could one be less considerate; act with less reflection? she wanted me to give her my word, a positive promise: and if Madame de Thianges had not come in, we should have quarrelled. What, on the word of Madame de Martigues' physician I should accustom my heart to look forward to a time which perhaps may never come! I should promise, I should bind myself! The

misfortune of a woman, who never gave me any cauſe of complaint, ſhould be the point on which my ideas of happineſs ſhould reſt! I ſhould think myſelf unjuſt and cruel, were I capable of entertaining a hope, which I ought not to conceive or cheriſh. Adieu, my friend, I have related to you this long and ſilly converſation, at the riſque of tiring you. Indeed, my mind is ſo full of it, I cannot follow any other ſubject.

One, in the Morning.

Monſieur de Montalais ſupped with us. I obſerved him with much attention. What makes Madame de Martigues think that he is in love, *paſſionately in love?* I have not diſcovered in his eyes the langour which characteriſes that paſſion. They were lively, full of fire and of joy; is this a ſymptom of love? My friend, love is ſad; it ſhuts our hearts to every pleaſure which it does not give.

LETTER XX.

WHAT! two mails without any letter from you. Are you ſick, are you angry, do you ſeek to make me uneaſy? Oh, my God, how long is your abſence, how much does it afflict me! You do not know how much I wiſh for you, how anxious I am to open my heart to you. I form a hundred ſchemes, I have a thouſand whims. Often am I tempted to quit Paris; the world tires me, deafens me, it no longer amuſes. I wiſh to go to Mondelis. Yes I do: and what forſooth detains me? The journey will appear extraordinary, in this inclement ſeaſon. No matter, I believe, I will go.

Indeed, my dear Count, I feel an earneſt deſire to ſee this peaceful abode, to find myſelf again in thoſe woods, the ſolitude of which is neceſſary to the

repoſe of my mind. For ſome time paſt every thing has been diſagreeable to me; I reliſh no longer the amuſements of a ſociety which uſed to pleaſe me ſo much. My ſiſter begins to tire me again with her tedious panegyric on the Marquis de Limeuil. She praiſes him, ſupports and encourages him in his importunity. They ſpeak to me of nothing but alliances, titles, ſettlements! Madame de Comminges upholds the pretenſions of Count de Royes; the Marſhaleſs de Termes courts me for the Chevalier. A large fortune invites many attempts againſt the liberty of a woman! Is not Madame de Martigues alſo getting a huſband for me? Indeed it is for a diſtant day.

She ought to hold her tongue, and ceaſe to entertain me with what ſhe ſo fooliſhly imagines. I do not give entire credit to what ſhe ſays. She may be deceived, and miſtake a lively friendſhip for love. No, I do not believe her. I do not wiſh to believe her. But why did ſhe ſpeak to me? the imprudent woman! Now, the preſence of M. de Montalais is perplexing, embarraſſing to me; I am afraid to liſten to him: I fear to anſwer him. Madame de Martigues has deſtroyed all the pleaſure which I felt in ſeeing him. Adieu; write me ſoon; can you neglect the moſt tender of your friends, and why do you?

LETTER XXI.

YOUR friend has diſſipated my uneaſineſs; I have been pleaſed to learn that an unforeſeen journey was the only cauſe of the interruption in our correſpondence. I received him as a perſon whom you eſteem; and this evening I take him to Madame de Martigues.

I ask your advice, my dear Count, and I ask it with an intention to follow it; give it to me in the fincerity of your heart. A ſcruple riſes in mine; perhaps too much delicacy gives riſe to it, perhaps it is juſt and reaſonable. Examine my ſituation and determine what I ſhould do.

Is it becoming for me to receive in my own houſe, to ſee regularly in other families, a man ſuſpected of a ſentiment which circumſtances render criminal? Has the Marquis confided his ſecret? Have they gueſſed it? If Madame de Martigues has diſcovered it, will others be leſs quick ſighted? He to love me! Ah, what hope ſhould attach him to me. If I continue to ſee him, ſhall I have nothing to reproach myſelf with. Good God! what happened to me yeſterday, ſeems to prove the contrary.

I was at Madame de Comminges'; the Marchioneſs of Montalais was announced. In hearing her name, I felt a ſecret emotion; the ſight of her increaſed it: I recalled to my mind the converſation of Madame de Martigues; I was confuſed. It ſeemed as if I had wronged this woman; ſhe is neglected, and perhaps on my account. When ſhe ſpoke, compaſſion, a lively intereſt filled my heart. I felt an inclination to pity, to ſerve, to love her.

She has nothing abſolutely ſhocking; her perſon and appearance are not now indeed as uſual. Her mien is noble, perhaps ſhe appears cold; ſhe is not abſolutely ugly, one is ſoon accuſtomed to her phyſiognomy; her teeth are white, and when ſhe ſmiles her face appears lovely. She told Madame de Comminges ſhe did not enjoy a good health, and would not go out for the reſt of the winter. She looked attentively at me; addreſſed me a flattering compliment: I know not whether I anſwered it. I was not myſelf.

How lightly does Madame de Martigues ſpeak

of this poor unfortunate woman! Yes, unfortunate. She adores her husband and is not loved by him. Perhaps her attentions are troublesome. She is very unhappy! M. de Montalais treats her with respect; but what is respect for a sensible heart, a tender soul! My friend, few are the women whose fate is to be envied!

Adieu. Answer precisely and without disguise the first part of this letter. Give me your opinion. I wish much to go to Mondelis; but to quit all one's friends! Are we to think of ourselves alone? Do we owe nothing to others?

LETTER XXII.

A CONFIDENCE, say you? I have given you a confidence; I! is it true? When was it! Of what? You were looking for it *long ago;* you wish it *entire;* you would speak to me *without disguise.*

You *dare not* yet *to hazard counsels dictated by the truest friendship*: Your knowledge of my *happy temper* hardly quiets you on the delicacy of the subject, on the fear of shewing a zeal which appears to me *officious, indiscreet.* Oh, good God, you frighten me. This, *take care, Madam, take care,* has given me the greatest terror: indeed my heart did beat, I looked around me, I examined the precipice from which I was about to fall. Can you then alarm your best friend, and then be silent, and close so singular, so strange a letter, with enigmatic reflections, with an useless apology, on the motive which engages, which induces you .....? To what does it induce you? Is it reasonable to conclude so abruptly? I cannot forgive you this ill timed *respect,* this *frivolous* fear; For the first time you have made me feel, that it is possible for you to disoblige me.

LETTER XXIII.

I RECEIVED your two letters together. In perusing them my first inclination was to be vexed with you; I left them, retook them, threw them away, and afterwards examined them. In reflecting on your more shocking expressions, I have thought that so tender a friend could not intend to afflict, much less to offend me. Truth sometimes causes a sensible soul to revolt, but it always persuades a just mind. I have followed your advice. I have examined myself; I have interrogated my heart... Alas! my dear Count, it is too true..... May I say so.... May I confess it; my heart has spoken..... and spoken like you.

After having refused so many distinguished offers, after having announced so much love for my liberty, after having resisted so many pressing solicitations, avoided so many dangerous snares, I have then come to the fatal period at which my reason is to forsake me, my happiness to be destroyed, and an end is to be put to the confidence which I have hitherto had in my own strength!

M. de Montalais *pleases* or *will please me*, say you? Ah why is not this doubt still in my heart. M. de Montalais pleases me, I own it. After having blushed before him, I fear not to blush before another.

My situation is sad, it is cruel! What have I to expect from an useless passion, a guilty inclination, a sentiment which will ever be attended with bitterness? Self-reproach, vain wishes, shame, remorse, perhaps one day, an unjust jealousy; such are the emotions which love will naturally excite in the breast of your unfortunate friend—Ah, if it were to change my principles; to bring me ever to think like Madame de Cezanes! If contemptible in my

own eyes, I dared to daviate..... to view as an advantage ..... Let us baniſh this horrible idea.

I ought to have fled at firſt. Oh good God! I wiſhed to do ſo. But good breeding detains me; I meet with many difficulties; perhaps I take pleaſure in yielding; perhaps I conceal from myſelf the ſatisfaction I have in ſtaying. *I ought to have avoided the Marquis.* Connected with all his friends, he meets me in all their houſes. Under what pretence could I ſhut my door to a man of his rank, of his merit, ſo near a relation of Count de Hiennes, of Madame de Comminges, to the intimate friends of Madame de Martigues?

Shall I tell you all? Flattering illuſions often mingle with the inquietude of my heart. Often do I accuſe myſelf of too much ſeverity; my ſoul already ſeduced is attached to new reflections; I have looked with complacence on all around me; I have ſeen that love has an affection for all, that all ſeem happy under its ſweet influence. Ah! why ſhould there be a ſubject of fear in a ſentiment ſo natural, have I aſked myſelf, in a paſſion ſo agreeable? Does it always lead to abaſement? can it not be felt without yielding to indelicacy, without paſſing the limits which honor preſcribes? Does a juſt preference which is granted to an amiable man neceſſarily lead to this vicious exceſs? Tell me, my dear Count, in a heart like that of the Marquis, do you believe it impoſſible to find this purity of affection, this diſcreet love, diſintereſted—ah! do not rally me, I am neither fooliſh nor romantic. Suppoſe a worthy man to have my manner of thinking, of feeling; is this going too far? If you venture to avow it, renounce the ſuperiority which you claim to be yours.

Is it very ſure however that a raſh hope does not bring the Marquis near me, that he does not confound me with thoſe imprudent——Alas! what do I know?

Is my prejudice his only vindication? does it lend him qualities, virtues.... No, his ſilence, his reſpect, his conſtant attention in repreſſing, in concealing the emotions of his heart.... Notwithſtanding that he is not free, he loves me, he dares to tell it to Madame de Martigues, perhaps in time he will preſume further; his looks too expreſſive, already ſpeak—Ah! why has Madame de Martigues removed from my eyes the veil which I would fondly have left? why has ſhe told me....? My friend I will follow your advice. I ought to avoid Montalais, it is neceſſary to flee from him, to withdraw; ah! yes, it is neceſſary.

To withdraw! to avoid him, to look for him no more, to hope no more to meet him, to renounce the pleaſure of ſeeing him, of expecting him. Ah! what occaſion has he given me to fear him, to avoid him? what has he ſaid to me? what is his crime? how difficult is reaſon, how imperious and yet how weak! it counſels and does not determine; it fixes our ideas on objects which are ſad; it exacts a ſacrifice of every thing which charms us; I hate it: I wish however to yield to it. My dear Count, I will; but I regret the neceſſity. I ſee the occaſion which requires me to depart, and I weep in ſeeing it ſo plainly. Ah! love has already given me ſo many troubles, it cannot fail to bring the tear of ſorrow, a bluſh of reproach.

I am weak and unfortunate; ſee the avowal you would deſire; it coſts me a ſtruggle, it humiliates me; but I owe it to friendſhip, to the lively and ſincere intereſt, which you manifeſt, for my welfare. Am I then worthy of this flattering eſteem? Yes, for my firſt letter ſhall be dated from Mondelis. My mind is decided, my departure reſolved on. I will ſacrifice every thing to my duty; but I cannot promiſe not to afflict myſelf. My friend, leave me to weep; give me none of your ſtoic conſolations; to

conſtrain the heart by every effort which honor demands; is noble, brave; but to diſſemble, to deny our grief, is a falſe pride; is it leſs generous to be ſenſible of it? Adieu; love me, eſteem me always.

LETTER XXIV.

DO not ſuſpect me of a vile complaiſance for myſelf, do not accuſe me of weakneſs; my ſiſter alone detains me at Paris; ſhe is ſick and much troubled; I cannot leave her at a time when my preſence is ſo much wanted, when my cares are ſo neceſſary; my departure depends at preſent on her recovery.

In truth, my dear Count, when I reflect on the ſtep I am going to take, it aſtoniſhes me, it frightens me. How can I juſtify it in the eyes of my friends, of the ſociety I frequent, of the world? If my motive ſhould be penetrated, if Madame de Martigues ſhould gueſs, if M. de Montalais ſhould think..... To ſet out in the midſt of the winter, without any apparent reaſon, without firſt informing my moſt intimate friends of my journey! To go away like a ſilly woman who cares not for any thing, who regards nobody. What will my ſiſter ſay, her huſband, my acquaintances? Not to confide the reaſon of ſuch extraordinary conduct to Madame de Termes, to Madame de Martigues! They will think me crazy, capricious, mad! They will recollect my firſt reputation; they will ſay, *she has fallen into the former wanderings of her mind.* Before, I was very indifferent about the opinion which might be formed reſpecting my temper. No perſon intereſted me much. Certain of having nothing to reproach myſelf, I was little troubled to ſeek the favorable judgment of others. I have no longer this indifference; the ill opinion of one alone would afflict me; I ſhould be

inconsolable to be less esteemed. Ah, my God, what will be said? And Termes, I have just invited him to lodge at my house, what will he imagine? What an embarrassment! How unfortunate I am! to risk the offending of all my friends, to lose them, and for what? to avoid, to flee from, whom? the object of my most tender affection. Adieu.

LETTER XXV.

NO, I have not gone, but I will go, be assured; ah! I cannot stay. May I tell you all? alas! I have already. My position is the same, my resolution cannot change, the more I examine Montalais, the more do I feel the necessity of absenting myself. I see him too often, they speak to me too much of him. Every moment it is repeated that he is amiable, charming, without an equal. I attend, listen, and find it difficult to praise him enough to do him justice.

I pass the whole day with my sister; in the evening Madame de Martigues comes to take me, to compel me to sup with her, or at Comminges'. Montalais is constantly there. For a short time past he has appeared serious, indeed sad; he sighs often, his sadness moves my heart; I strive in vain to conceal mine; he sees it, it interests him, he seems anxious to ask me the cause; he speaks, interrupts himself, casts down his eyes, is silent; all these emotions agitate me! why did they learn me how to interpret them! my sentiments could have rendered me happy, if I had never been informed of his; if they had not excited in my mind this fearful apprehension of suffering my feelings to be discovered. It is too late, I write only to tell you that I am sick, I must seek a little repose, so necessary to my troubled mind. I am incessantly fatigued in seeking reasons

to excuse my departure, to render less revolting this journey so *indispensable;* I do not perceive any. Seek also, my dear Count, impart to me your ideas, try to fix mine.

LETTER XXVI.

YES, *still at Paris.* I cannot answer you; I know not how to employ myself at present; a trifling adventure gives me the greatest agitation, disturbs me, embarrasses me, disconcerts all my ideas; would you believe it? I am ready to quarrel, yes almost ready to quarrel with M. de Montalais. In the present disposition of my mind, I could set out this morning with less regret. This man so *perfect*, is quite singular, quite mysterious; he often sees ill, is often prejudiced; he has defects, I believe.

On Saturday I was at Madame de Comminges'; after supper, we undertook to make verses; they were committed to paper, and the worse we found them, the more did they amuse. Madame de Martigues read them, and you know what a grace she gives to the smallest pleasantry. the Marquis took his seat near me; Themines came to speak with him; he arose; in listening, he had a wild air; our eyes often met; never did his appear to me more dangerous. My God, how I was affected! In examining him, I repeated to myself, his friends are right, he is indeed *charming, without an equal.*

Themines left him; he resumed his seat: they began again to read. A few lines on friendship addressed to Madame de Termes, gave him a hint of the paper I had just been writing upon; he demanded it with quickness; Madame de Martigues threw it to him. He read it, observed me a moment in silence and afterwards wrote upon the back of the paper

Madame de Themines, riſing up at this moment, curious, as heedleſs almoſt as Madame de Martigues, dexterouſly took away the piece. The Marquis gave a loud cry, and roſe up precipitately; ſhe fled, he purſued her; in her haſte ſhe confided to me her theft. A faithleſs depoſitary, I concealed the writing; ſubſtituting another in its place, I pretended to burn it. The Marquis thanked me, Madame de Themines ſcolded, and no more was thought of it.

Having returned home my firſt care was to read what the Marquis was ſo fearful to let Madame de Themines ſee. I found theſe verſes.

In gentle friendſhip, full of ſweeteſt charms,
Let Love be veil'd and all his ſoft alarms.
Ah! if foſter'd by your indulgent ſmile,
His heedleſs voice diſcretion ſhould beguile!
What cool reſerve could hide the crimſon bluſh,
Or teach the flutt'ring heart its fears to huſh?

Lovely Themire, attach'd to all your ways,
Ardent, timid, he ſeeks, he dreads your eyes—
He flees, purſues, now ſhuns what then he ſought,
What does he fear? Alas, you know him not!

You ſee my dear Count, M. de Montalais is in the common error. *You know him not.* He believes me then inſenſible? ah! would I were ſo. I fear I have excited other ideas in his mind; at preſent he thinks perhaps.... I wiſh I had been leſs curious.

This morning, while they were dreſſing me, I took up the paper again; it excited a deſire to write. I immediately left the toilet, diſmiſſed my women, and ſeated myſelf before the fire; my hair in diſorder, a ſmall table by my ſide, a large book in my lap, the precious paper upon the book; I blotted, tore, began anew, tried without ceaſing; nothing pleaſed me; at laſt an idea occured; I was beginning to write it when they announced to me, whom? M. de Montalais.

Imagine my ſurpriſe, my confuſion; I wiſhed to conceal every thing; I roſe up, overturned the table, let fall the book; the paper flew, was falling in the fire, I ſcreamed, ſtooped down, ſnatched it from the midſt of the flames, and all black, and ſcarce extinguiſhed, I put it in my boſom. The Marquis obſerved my action and was ſurpriſed. I bluſhed and diſcovered an embarraſſment; he was confuſed, unable to ſpeak; he preſented me ſome roſes which Madame de Martigues had charged him to bring me; I accepted them. He took a chair; we knew not what to talk of. Common topics came to our aid, but were ſoon exhauſted; the converſation grew dull, the Marquis became thoughtful, I was ſilent; he aſked two or three queſtions, I anſwered *yes*, *no*, *I know not*, *indeed?* in ſpeaking he did not look at me, his eyes were fixed on the pieces of paper which lay ſcattered around me. *You were busy, Madam; it ſeems....I have chosen an ill hour to see you; I perceive....I....I have intruded, Madam, I have most certainly intruded!*

He repeated this expreſſion; it diſtreſſed me. I aſked in a low voice, to whom he thought I was writing? Ah, how could a woman accuſtomed to paſs a part of the day with him be occupied about another? At this moment I had ſooner pardoned a little vanity than his inquietude; he was going to gueſs——for him to form doubts, to believe me ſenſible, and not to ſee....alas! he has ſeen too plainly perhaps—This idea is to me inſupportable. He aroſe, bowed to me with a cold air, aſked my commands, and went out quickly, indeed abruptly, without perceiving that I had called him back by a queſtion. Oh! I am indeed diſpleaſed with him, with myſelf, with every body! Madame de Themines is much to be blamed. How fooliſh, too, was I conceal what I was writing; would he have noticed it?——I am ſometimes very ſilly!

My friend, I would not wiſh he ſhould add to

the misfortune of a hopeleſs love, that of jealouſy, that of loving with diſtreſs. I ſhould grieve to excite in his heart emotions ſo painful, cruel, afflicting! why have I not gone! Adieu.

LETTER XXVII.

YOU have always the ſame queſtion, *have I set out, have I sacrificed vain considerations?* It is indeed neceſſary. I have no art to diſſemble; I have diſdained an art too uſeful in ſociety. My countenance expreſſes all the emotions of my ſoul. M. de Montalais would penetrate the ſecret which it is ſo important for me to conceal from him.

What has he thought of my embarraſſment this morning? Why had I not power to ſpeak to him! How will he interpret my uneaſineſs, my bluſhes, the ſtupid ſilence it was impoſſible for me to break?

My ſiſter begins to recover. Madame de Themines was at her houſe when I arrived there. I ſaw Madame de Lurei enter the carriage; a deſire to avoid the company of this tireſome woman, a fine ſun, and pleaſant air, induced me to propoſe a walk with Madame de Themines to the Tuileries. We went out by the apartment of M. de Thore. In entering upon the terrace, the firſt perſon who preſented himſelf to our view was the Marquis de Montalais. I had the greateſt difficulty to repreſs my emotions; his preſence gave me as much ſurpriſe as if, after a long abſence, I had unexpectedly met him in a ſtrange land. He felicitated me upon the recovery of my ſiſter. Alas! it was going to ſeparate us for a long time, perhaps forever. Oh! my friend, how afflicting was the idea!

Madame de Martigues, and Madame de Thianges joined us, Termes, his wife and brother. I was be-

ginning to recover my compoſure in the midſt of this ſmall party, when Madame de Themines ſtopped with Madame de Thianges; this was nothing yet; but the inconſiderate, heedleſs Madame de Martigues took it into her head to lead away Madame de Termes, to ſeparate her from me, to carry her off in ſudden haſte to look at ſomething, I know not what, at the lower end of the terrace. Termes followed them, his brother too, and I remained alone with the Marquis.

To increaſe my embarraſſment, I perceived at a diſtance M. de Limeuil; he was haſtening to meet us. Without reflecting a moment, I betrayed a wiſh to avoid him, and turning ſuddenly, we walked back very faſt. How unfortunate is Limeuil, cried the Marquis, to love and not to pleaſe; then lowering his eyes and voice, he added, there is one perhaps ſtill more unfortunate. My heart was violently moved; I ſaid nothing. Ah! Madam, continued he, to love, to declare it, to expreſs the tender ſentiment, to hope, to flatter one's ſelf with obtaining at laſt ſome return, this is a happineſs indeed, compared with the lot of a wretched man who dares not aſk for pity, or even hope to excite it.

I know not how I recollect his words; my agitation in attending to him, was unſpeakable! In ſpite of myſelf, I relented my pace; the Marquis wiſhed to ſay more; the tone of his voice betrayed his emotions. I could ſcarcely ſupport myſelf, my reſpiration was difficult. Madame de Martigues at this moment returned, and the others came near us. I complained of fatigue; they exclaimed; I perſevered in my wiſh to retire. M. de Montalais conducted me to my carriage; he was ſilent, but his looks ſpoke, and I underſtood too well their language. In taking his leave, he bowed low and ſaid nothing to me; but I ſaw the tears in his eyes——How they affected me! Ah! why is not the amiable Montalais free? why am

I destined to be the unhappy occasion of his affliction? Alas! he suffers; he suffers more than I, perhaps? His sex is so ardent, so impetuous! We are accustomed to repress our emotions; this habit weakens, perhaps, their force——Ah, no! in losing sight of him, I wept, I groaned——I am interrupted; adieu.

LETTER XXVIII.

AH! my God, how pressing you are, how anxious, how ready *to fear, to suspect, to foresee!* Have I an intention to stay? Is it my fault that my departure is delayed, put off for a few days? do I *magnify the difficulties?* No, they increase upon me against my will. It would have been inhuman to leave my sister. Is it to *seise pretexts*, not to be cruel? *A tender heart always finds them.* My friend I do not seek them, be assured: but this journey is ill-timed enough, it will appear sufficiently ridiculous, without adding to it circumstances which would render it still more strange.

Your reproaches fill me with sorrow, they trouble me, they make me sad; do not, however, withhold them. My weakness is much to be regretted, I confess it, I entreat your pardon for it; let it animate you, but not cause you to revolt. Mingle softness, indulgence, in your counsels; bear my tedious details, my indecision, my regrets, my humor. Am I myself? Do not abandon me, do not give me up to the slights of my mind, to the seduction of my feelings. It is in the humiliation, the grief, the sensible bitterness of my heart, that I cry to you; assist me, support me, defend me! Ah! my friend, I weep, I feel....I cannot write——How sorrowful is my situation! If I was peaceful when you departed, now I am cruelly agitated. Ah! what are then all the blessings of life, if a single desire can render the

poſſeſſion of them uſeleſs?—Free, eſteemed, beloved, rich, miſtreſs of my will, of my fortune, the future was preſenting a charming proſpect! A dark curtain has dropped before my eyes; it hides from me all the advantages of my ſtate; I ſee only the Marquis de Montalais; this object arreſts all my attention, every hope and wiſh. Ah! *I ought indeed to flee him?* I am going to be removed to a diſtance, obſtacles ſeparate us, a troubled ſea ſeems to riſe up between us. What, this amiable man is *a rock on which I may be wrecked?* a ſudden guſt ſhall drive me into ſafety; but, my dear Count, I ſhall arrive at the port fatigued indeed by the ſtorm. Adieu. What have I written!

LETTER XXIX.

MY orders are given, my relays ready, I ſet out on Monday. This is my anſwer to your earneſt, your reaſonable exhortations; but do not miſtake the heart of your friend; no, my dear Count, no, I ſhall not recover at Mondelis the peace which you promiſe me there. Ah! I do not deſire to recover it. I avoid the danger of diſcovering too tender a paſſion; but I carry with me the dart with which my ſoul is pierced; I do not wiſh, I would never wiſh to tear it away. In the midſt of my ſolitude, I ſhall give myſelf up to my feelings without a bluſh; in ceaſing to fear, I ſhall ceaſe to ſtruggle with them. The idea of M. de Montalais, at preſent fraught with ſo much inquietude, which excites ſuch tumults in my heart, will give there none but the ſweeteſt emotions; I ſhall dare to tell myſelf, he loves me, I ſhall dare to confeſs to myſelf, my love for him in return; he will be ever preſent to my thoughts. How could I *banish the remembrance of him?* why do you tell me I muſt forget him? why do you wiſh it?

Do not assume this rigid tone, never borrow the language of Madame de Lugei. My friend, austerity is the mere ostentation of virtue; indulgent to others, let us know how to be so to ourselves. Attached to my duties, I wish to fulfill them without imposing upon myself the severest laws; to draw too tight the cord is to risk the danger of breaking it. Ah! why can I not pardon myself for a weakness which injures no one?

I cannot tell you any thing of Madame de Valance; I have not seen her; I would wish indeed not to see her. I hope however that she will not speak to me of her nephew. I shall very soon write from Mondelis——yes from Mondelis! Alas! am I then going there? Is it true then that I go? Indeed you shall not wait for my letters, you may expect to be overloaded with them. How often will I repeat to you the same expressions! What a satisfaction to open to you my heart! But do not chide me, treat me with gentleness. In drawing from me my secret, you have contracted the obligation to be patient; consider that I am sad, that I am very unhappy! You owe me regard, tenderness; treat me as a child; his demand is unreasonable, we know it, but sensible to its cries, we flatter, we appease him; we scold him, and we yield in part to his entreaties.

Oh! my God! what am I going to do at Mondelis? To write to you, to weep, to grieve, to afflict myself; these are the occupations which will be offered to me in this *peaceful* retreat which you desire for me, where prudence leads me, where regret and distress await me. Adieu. I am making a painful effort; leave me to feel it, to confess it; is this the time to demand that I should applaud myself for it?

LETTER XXX.

LISTEN to me, do not be impatient; I am not yet gone; but if appearances are againſt me, I can eaſily juſtify myſelf. The uncle of Madame de Termes died yeſterday very ſuddenly. She was at his houſe; he was in converſation with her; he extended his hand towards her, inclined his head, and expired in a moment. Nothing could be more afflicting or alarming than this terrible event. It is impoſſible for me to leave her in her diſtreſs; ſhe will ſee only Madame de Martigues and myſelf. Do I not owe her all the conſolation I can render? Is this a time for me to depart? My dear Count, will you call a *pretext*, my regard for ſo dear a friend?

Termes is much affected by this mournful accident. He eſteemed, he loved this worthy, this venerable man; he ſhewed him all the attentions of a near relation, made it his duty to accompany him every where, and felt himſelf honored by an alliance with ſo virtuous a character.

You knew the Count de Termes, the uprightneſs of his heart, the juſtneſs of his ſentiments; he had never the vanity to boaſt of his illuſtrious deſcent. I have often heard him wiſh that nobility were not derived from birth, that it might be the reward of noble actions. Suppoſing this law eſtabliſhed, how many titles would honor the tomb of M. de Meri? How many families relieved by his kindneſs, ſupported by his bounty, would enrich his memory with the teſtimonies of their gratitude! Ah! how does it concern thoſe, whoſe happineſs he procured, whoſe tender benedictions, whoſe ſorrowful lamentations reſounded near his coffin, how does it concern them whether his fathers were peaceefully occupied in the cares of procuring an abundance to their country, of introducing to it the riches of diſtant climes, or whether

they carried war and deſtruction wherever they went. We have ridiculous prejudices; we know them; our reaſon condemns, rejects them; cuſtom and pride retain them, preſerve to them their dominion over us.

I have withdrawn for a moment to write to you. I muſt return to Madame de Termes.

Oh! my friend, how much is the fate of Madame de Termes to be preferred to mine! She loves, and is beloved; ſhe ſays it. At this moment ſhe is weeping; but a dear hand is given her to wipe away her tears, a tender heart to partake of all her diſtreſs! It will paſs away; time will efface the traces of her grief; pleaſure will grow up again in the feeling heart of my friend, and I, my dear Count, will go to Mondelis; I ſhall weep there alone; no one perhaps will regret my abſence; M. de Montalais will perhaps forget me—Ah! why ſhould he not forget me?

I have ſeen Madame de Valance; ſhe preſented to me her nephew; yeſterday evening they both ſupped here. The young Count has an agreeable perſon, and I believe a very mild diſpoſition. Your friend is not prudent; ſhe would perſuade herſelf and others, that I may approve of her ſchemes. M. de Montalais, being ſeated near her, ſpoke to her two or three times very low; I know not what they ſaid; but he was quite ſad all the evening. Adieu, my dear Count, love me always.

LETTER XXXI.

Still at PARIS.

YOU revolt at this date, without doubt; but what can I do? An evil genius oppoſes my deſigns, reverſes all my ſchemes; I was all in readineſs, I was juſt going to ſet out; an obſtacle the moſt un-

foreſeen detains me, fixes me, at Paris; my journey becomes impoſſible, for a month to come, perhaps two; indeed I muſt not regret it. After all, it is ſo much the better; the ſeaſon will be further advanced, and my departure will appear leſs ſtrange in the ſpring than in the middle of February.

Wholly engaged in the thoughts of this cruel departure, alone with Madame de Termes, about to take my leave of her for ſo long a time, my heart was afflicted; an emotion of ſorrow and affection made me throw my arms around her; I preſſed her to my boſom; I was going to ſpeak to her, to confide to her my feelings, my fears, to unboſom to her my whole heart; the Count de Piennes came at this moment, opened the door ſuddenly, and entered, like a ſilly fellow; give me joy, he cried; Madame de Martigues is favorably inclined, ſhe conſents; ſhe condeſcends..... Oh! could I purchaſe too dearly the pleaſure which I feel? .... I am going to marry her, I am going to be the happieſt of men!

Madame de Termes was aſtoniſhed, ſhe lifted up her hands in ſurpriſe, obliged him to repeat what he had juſt ſaid. I begged him not to deceive himſelf. He ſhewed us the portrait of Madame de Martigues. See here, ſaid he, the precious pledge of our approaching union; Ah! I was, indeed, far from expecting this happineſs. No, ſhe is not inſenſible, as many do her the injuſtice to think; ſhe is capable of tenderneſs, of condeſcenſion; indeed, ſhe was proving the ſtrength of my attachment; was ſhe not right? And can I flatter myſelf that I deſerve her? What a favor does ſhe beſtow in giving herſelf to me! What, I am indeed to obtain her? ſhe gives herſelf to me; ſhe, Madame de Martigues? Oh! my dear, charming friends, partake of my joy, my heart can ſcarcely contain it; I can hardly breathe!

He ſat down, roſe up immediately, kiſſed the miniature, embraced us, walked acroſs the room,

ſtopped, threw himſelf upon a chair; he knew not what he ſaid, what he did; he was tranſported; you never ſaw expreſſed a paſſion ſo lively, ſo fooliſh, and yet ſo natural, ſo true, ſo affecting. Theſe are the happy moments of life; they rapidly develop all the advantages of our ſenſibility. Ah! does reſerve, reflecting reaſon, ever bring theſe delicious moments?

Madame de Martigues is arrived, more joyful, more gay and charming than I can paint her. *Has he told you; Do you know? I have done right, have I not?* Madame de Termes and myſelf applauded her very much, careſſed her; the Count expreſſed his gratitude by tears, by cries of joy; ſhe confirmed to him her promiſe, and called upon us to witneſs her engagements. M. de Montalais has the glory of having at laſt determined a mind the moſt indeciſive upon this ſingle ſubject; it is to his earneſt ſolicitations that the Count will owe his happineſs. The time of it is fixed for the tenth of next month; it is a reſolution irrevocably decided. Madame de Martigues will be the Counteſs de Piennes.

I haſten to inform you of this news; you ought to think it an excuſe for a delay which decorum requires. Adieu, my dear friend, I am ſomewhat leſs ſad, leſs overcome, this morning; it is a great happineſs to be warmly intereſted for one's friends; the events which affect them excite our ſenſibility. If theſe events are fortunate, they convince us, that our hearts, fallen perhaps under the weight of our own ſorrows, may yet be reanimated, may be raiſed to the loveliеſt tranſports of joy.

LETTER XXXII.

YOUR letter would indeed diſtreſs me, had I not every reaſon to encourage myſelf. While I

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am at Paris you see me, you say, *suspended by a hair from a fearful height; a breath may precipitate me.* What an idea! *A look, a sigh, my embarrassment, my very silence, may betray me.* Banish this fear: Ah! mine is indeed diminished. M. de Montalais shews me at present much coldness .... Coldness? No, it is not; it is his humor, his chagrin, his discontent; his words have a tone of reproach, of complaint; he observes me thoughtfully, his looks follow me, he repeats my expressions; he seems convinced that they include a covered meaning; in seeing us together, one would imagine that, having been hitherto more intimate, one of us had given the other some cause of distrust or uneasiness; our intercourse is very extraordinary, I assure you; less constraint would render it perhaps regretful; if we were not each on our guard against our emotions, we should quarrel, I believe.

A note from Madame de Comminges this moment informs me that the Marchioness de Montalais is in the greatest affliction. She has just lost her son, a dear child of five years, whose life assured the fortune of his father; thus, of the heirs which Madame de Martigues has amused herself in counting, there remains the one only whose birth may be so sorrowful.

My friend, you know how apt we are to trifle, how inclined to jest at every thing; this sportive turn in our conversation is often cruelly exercised; we are too much accustomed to cast a ridicule on subjects the least susceptible of it; the pleasantries of Madame de Martigues are frequently misplaced. If the Marchioness should die at this time, of all the rich possessions of the Marquis, there would remain to him only an estate of 12,000 livres a year. His father, in compelling him to marry, attended little to the articles; he left them to the direction of an artful guardian, who willed to favor his other ward,

the Count de Roye; on failure of iſſue of the Marquis, he ſucceeds to the eſtate of his couſin.

I really applaud myſelf for my reſiſtance; if I had liſtened to Madame de Comminges, Madame de Thianges, yourſelf and others, I ſhould have been theſe two years paſt, Counteſs de Roye; I ſhould have had the unhappineſs to think that I might one day profit by the misfortune of M. de Montalais. Ah! this would be a moſt diſtreſſing proſpect! The only charm of my life is to be free. Do not doubt the truth of this expreſſion; be attentive to underſtand my ideas; my imagination does not wander; how could I permit myſelf to entertain cruel hopes? No, my dear Count, my weakneſs ſhall never alter my principles. I hope that Madame de Montalais may live, that ſhe may be happy: Ah! my God, I ſhould deſpiſe myſelf if I did not wiſh ſo ſincerely. Adieu.

P. S. The young Valance has not had much ſucceſs at Madame de Martigues'; they find him grave and dull; M. de Montalais is much diſpleaſed with his aunt, and Count de Piennes cannot endure her; ſhe is now very ſure that I ſhall never be her niece.

LETTER XXXIII.

YOUR letter has much affected me; I have read it ſeveral times; I repeat with delight your flattering expreſſions; I love to find that you think well of your friend; to hear you tell me, *I do not ſuſpect you of weakneſs; my counſels tend only to make you avoid painful ſtruggles.* Well, my dear friend, your good opinion ſhall encourage me, your confidence ſhall reanimate mine. Yes, you are right: I have *ſenſibi-*

lity, but I will not yield to my *weakness*. I dare to hope ſo; *I will never be imprudent*.

Altho' politeneſs or friendſhip no longer oblige me to ſtay, no longer forbid me to leave Madame de Martigues, my journey would now be uſeleſs. I wiſhed to remove to a diſtance from M. de Montalais. Alas! he is going himſelf. The Marchioneſs is perſuaded that the air of Paris makes her ill; ſhe attributes to its thickneſs the oppreſſion of which ſhe unceaſingly complains; her condition does not permit her to expoſe herſelf to the danger of a long journey, and as ſhe cannot go to her own ſeat, the Count de Roye accommodates her with one he has lately purchaſed at Corbeil.

She ſets out to-morrow; her huſband follows her; he will remain in the country all the time ſhe wiſhes to ſtay there.

In taking leave of me this morning, he gave me the greateſt embarraſſment. He appeared ſad, uneaſy, dejected; I was troubled, diſtreſſed, I left Madame de Termes to ſpeak, I could ſay nothing; his ſituation afflicted me; it is a ſorrowful one; he has juſt loſt a lovely child, and while his friends are anxious to conſole him, when their cares might ſoften his grief, he is carried into the country, taken from every diſſipation——But the poor Marchioneſs is miſerable; ſhe is very ill; he ſhews her the tendereſt compaſſion; I approve of his readineſs to diſcharge an indiſpenſable duty, I admire him for it, I pity ..... Ah! why, why has this amiable Montalais ſo many regrets, ſo much diſtreſs? Why is he not permitted to be happy? He is ſo worthy to be ſo!

When I began to write, I wiſhed to anſwer your letter particularly, to notice all your obliging aſſurances of eſteem, of friendſhip; but I feel quite unwell; my head burns; for ſeveral days paſt an extreme heavineſs has oppreſſed me; always reſtleſs; I can-

not sleep; I can scarcely hold my pen; Ah! my God! what is it affects me? The season, perhaps? This adieu which has distressed me ..... I am interrupted ..... I must leave you. If I find myself better presently, I will finish my letter.

LETTER XXXIV.

From MADAME DE TERMES *to the Same.*

HOW much am I afflicted, Sir, in not being able to relieve you from the inquietude which the silence of M. de Sancerre has given you, without making you partake of all my alarms! Alas! our charming friend is sick, very sick! She is in danger; for these ten days past, a continual fever, attended with fearful symptoms, have made me tremble for a life so dear to us all. Madame de Martigues and myself never leave her chamber, we pass the day and night with her; the lovely, interesting patient excites all our attention; we say nothing, we are afraid to communicate our ideas; we intermingle our sighs and our tears ..... Ah! what will become of me if I lose my affectionate, my solid friend, my respected companion? what consolation will be left for all those who are so truly attached to her? The loss of Madame de Sancerre would be for ever regretted by all her friends; their joy and their happiness would be buried with her.

Pardon me, Sir, for thus afflicting your heart; I will relieve your solicitude from time to time. Heaven be propitious to my ardent prayers.

LETTER XXXV.

From MADAME DE TERMES *to the Same.*

YOU have not yet received my letter; yours diſtreſſes me. Alas! Sir, I cannot *remove your uneaſiness.* I ſhould be happy indeed to have it in my power. We are aſſured that if the fifteenth day paſs without an increaſe of the fever, we ſhall have nothing to fear; this period does not commence until to-morrow after the ſetting out of the mail; ſo that it cannot bring you the conſolation I ſhould ſo much rejoice in being able to ſend you.

M. de Termes aſſures me that this cruel fever is in no degree malignant; the phyſicians ſay ſo, but I fear they flatter. Ah! Madame de Sancerre is very ill; her dear mother died of a diſorder exactly ſimilar. Her emotions alarm me; her mind is ſtrangely occupied; ſhe ſpeaks inceſſantly of her departure, of her horſes in readineſs, of her retreat to Mondelis; ſhe bids me farewell in the moſt affectionate manner; ſhe breaks my heart. Ah! why is the mind of my poor friend ſo diſordered? why does ſhe ſpeak of her departure, why repeat to me her ſorrowful adieus? Is not this a preſage.....? Heaven avert my fearful forebodings. We are weak indeed when we are alarmed. Sometimes I adopt the ſad preſentiments of her women and mine; I imagine that the approaches of death inſpire her with theſe ſtrange ideas.——Ah! my God, ... But M. de Termes comforts me a little; he entreats you not to fear, to be more reaſonable than I, to indulge your hopes. I wiſh, Sir, you may.

LETTER XXXVI.

From MADAME DE TERMES *to the Same.*

THE day of the criſis is paſſed; thanks to Heaven, it is happily paſſed; Madame de Sancerre is thought to be out of danger; ſhe had a peaceful and refreshing ſleep the laſt night, which has revived our hopes. The phyſician aſſures us with the moſt ſmiling air, that ſhe will ſoon be reſtored to health, and to her friends. Be compoſed, Sir, the ſweeteſt, loveliest of women will live; ſhe will live to ſpread around her conſolation and delight.

The whole houſe is intoxicated with joy; her women, mine, thoſe of Madame de Martigues, her domeſtics, ours, even the ſmalleſt ſervants, appear tranſported. They cry, they laugh, they embrace each other, ſpeak without underſtanding what; they ſurround the doctor, kiſs his hands, his coat; they load him with their bleſſings, they call him an angel, they would bear him to his carriage in their arms. Gracious Heaven! exclaimed the good man, how much is this lady beloved! Is ſhe then as beneficent as ſhe is beautiful? Adieu, Sir, encourage yourſelf with every hope, ceaſe to be alarmed; Madame de Sancerre is better, much better. The next poſt, I truſt, will inform you of her perfect recovery.

LETTER XXXVII.

From MADAME DE MARTIGUES *to the Same.*

I ENTREAT your peace; be ſilent. With your mournful expreſſions would you bring back all our fears, all our grief? Heaven has removed our

doubts respecting the situation of Madame de Sancerre. She is well, very well; but I suppose it will be difficult to persuade you so. *Tender and melancholy*, sad and reserved, you love to afflict yourself; when a cloud, dark indeed, has attracted your attention, you are troubled after it has passed away.

Our dear patient is about to recover immediately.

How does she conduct? what care does she take? Ah! truly we have need of your advice. You think you have superior judgment, foresight. Are you not satisfied that I am ever with Madame de Sancerre? Whose directions are to be observed in this chamber but mine? Ask Madame de Termes if I am not an attentive nurse, and, what she might forget to add, a *prudent* one too?

The Count de Piennes has showed me your letter; he is charmed with your friendship, your felicitations. But what indeed could be more singular? All Paris says I am going to marry him; they talk of it in Brittany: I was the first to say it; however I do not like to hear this news repeated; often am I tempted to bet that it is not true.

While you are all regret, make me compliments of condolence. *Upon what?* Upon my marriage; why not? To be married! Oh, it is so serious, so sad! I shall be so tired, tormented; and yet I must be so good, so complaisant! ..... Are you not almost dead with the vapours at Rennes? Will you never return? Good day, my poor Count, you are much to be pitied. To be in the country, to be engaged in law suits, to live as you do, is it not very tiresome?

From MADAME DE TERMES.

Madame de Martigues has reason to boast of her cares; never was any person more assiduous, more affectionate; the sensibility of her heart is not

enough known; notwithstanding the levity of her mind, she is capable of a solid attachment, of a lively and constant friendship. The sentiments she has shewn on this sorrowful occasion, have endeared her to me more than ever. She has already resumed her gaiety; her eyes, full of sprightliness, no longer present those tears of grief, with which they were filled. The reproaches she has made you are proper enough. I tremble to think of the situation in which I have seen Madame de Sancerre. Ah! Sir, I was very anxious; I had need of Madame de Martigues to prevent me from abandoning myself to the most gloomy reflections.

You must indeed dismiss your apprehensions; Madame de Sancerre is without any fever; her weakness is extreme, but she is not at all alarmed; on the contrary she is entirely comforted; as soon as your friend can sustain the fatigue of writing, you shall have a line from her hand, so necessary *to your eye and your heart.*

Do not listen to Madame de Martigues; she will marry; nothing is more certain. The illness of Madame de Sancerre has been doubly interesting to Count de Piennes; this alone has retarded his happiness. The marriage, so much desired, will take place the next month; the articles are drawn up; if Madame de Martigues should bet against this, she would surely lose. Adieu, Sir, entertain no further fear, Madame de Sancerre entreats you.

LETTER XXXVIII.

From MADAME DE SANCERRE *to the Same.*

MAD. de Termes has read me all your letters. I did not doubt your friendship, my dear Count; but

these proofs of an attachment so lively, so tender have deeply affected me; they have excited my tears; I have felt a sadness and yet a pleasure in repeating to myself your expressions. Why did Madame de Termes distress you? why did she tell you I was in danger? But it would be very unkind in me to complain of her. Oh, my amiable friends! how shall I requite them for so much care, so much attention, such kindness? Ah! friendship is not a name; the sentiment has an existence in the heart; it forms the glory and the happiness of humanity. How is my life important to the felicity of so many persons independent of me? what interest can attach them to me, what make them fear my loss? My friend, I wished to live; I felt a happiness in reviving, in becoming reanimated; it is necessary to be beloved, it is necessary to see one's self ready to excite distressing regrets, in order to taste the pleasure of being conscious that we breathe, that we exist.

But I have retarded the wished for marriage of Count de Piennes! I have deranged, afflicted this charming society; the most simple amusements have been banished. Alas! I was very ungrateful to wish to withdraw myself from it, to go to Mondelis, to give up all for my own tranquillity. Let us speak no more of this journey; no let us never speak of it.

I cannot write a long time, my hand grows tired, my eyes are weak. I have few ideas; little recollection; a thick cloud seems to overshadow every object. M. de Montalais is still in the country; he has had much grief, it is said; he is yet much distressed. Alas! I am ready to sympathise with him; he has lost his only child; should he lose his wife..... he will not lose her, I hope, I pray; I still remember how much I ought to hope so. Adieu, my dear Count; receive the assurances of my gratitude and my friendship.

LETTER XXXIX.

YOUR reflections upon the humor of Madame de Martigues are a little too severe: why, indeed, do you doubt her resolutions? She has made this engagement for once too strong; how could she break it? Her miniature is given, her intentions announced, a contract prepared for signing..... Ah! you do not regard it? Her card signifies nothing; it is mere sport? Count de Piennes would rage if he were to read this part of your letter; it would give him a real alarm. Madame de Thianges does not leave Madame de Martigues; the name of sister has already became familiar; every thing is prepared, every thing arranged; a thousand workmen are busy; nothing gives room to suspect a change of mind in either of the parties; it is indeed impossible to foresee any.

I am permitted to forsake my tiresome regimen. The finest season invites me to walk; the air does me much good; my ideas become more distinct; is this an advantage? I know not. There is a sort of stupid, peaceful pleasure; it suspends the rapid emotions of the soul; it calms the agitation of our feelings; in this tranquil state, we are ignorant, we forget; the time past is effaced from our mind; the future does not occupy it. If this situation has nothing in it which is much to be desired, it has nothing sorrowful, and I prove that it is possible to regret it. Madame de Montalais continues ill, *very ill*, says Madame de Martigues. Why can I not think of it without emotion? *Very ill.* I am distressed to hear it..,.. But I have been ill also; and did they not think my death certain? My friend I will hope for her happiness, as much as for my own. It is my sincere wish that she may recover.

I am ſorry Madame de Martigues has ſhown me the letters of the Marquis, I would have wiſhed not to know how much he intereſted himſelf for me. During the firſt days of my fever, he ſent every morning an expreſs to Count de Piennes and every evening Madame de Martigues diſpatched another to him. How affectionate his expreſſions!..... The indiſcreet woman! Was it neceſſary to force me to underſtand them, to continue reading them againſt my will? Ah! too tender, too earneſt, they are engraved upon my heart, they have brought back my trouble, my inquietude. These letters, the danger of the Marchioneſs, the language of Madame de Martigues, my own weakneſs..... Adieu. My ideas are confuſed; they wander far from me; I dare not fix them; I dare not reſt my attention on the only ..... I dare not reſt it on any thing.

LETTER XL.

THE wager which you offer to make, is very unkind towards Madame de Martigues. She will not marry, you ſay? I am diſtreſſed to ſee you perſiſt in this opinion; it grieves me the more, as Madame de Thianges was going to adopt it yeſterday. Her brother chides her for it; he has not the ſmalleſt doubt, nor have I; how can a lover deceive himſelf as to the diſpoſition of his miſtreſs? The day is fixed for ſigning the contract. Madame de Martigues will marry; with a little reluctance, perhaps, but ſhe will marry, be aſſured.

I learn this moment that Madame de Montalais is a little better. Never was the ſpring more ſmiling, more pleaſant; its agreeable influence affects all; may it revive the Marchioneſs, may it reſtore her to the wiſhes of a huſband who, without doubt, is attach-

to her. He is affectionate and generous; habit and the assurance of being loved form stronger ties than it is generally imagined. My friend, an unfortunate wandering has not narrowed my heart, has not concentered in myself all my sensibility; I dare to say, I am still just; I love to assure myself that I do not desire an event.... But why make this vain defence of my sentiments? I know not. My head is yet weak; I will finish my letter this evening.

Nine o'clock.

Madame de Themines has this moment left me; she is extremely angry at her husband; she cries, complains aloud, is very impatient; she says she can never forgive him; he has been guilty of a want of complaisance which I should myself complain of likewise. Themines insisted that the young Marchioness should accompany his mother to Bourbon, where she was going to take the waters; this impatient mother, in the fear of losing one precious moment for her health, thought proper to hasten her departure and to set out the very day of signing the marriage articles of Madame de Martigues and the Count de Piennes. Every body revolts at this arrangement; they press Themines to grant one week to his wife, to permit her to assist at the marriage of her friend, and that she might join her mother-in law immediately afterwards.

Themines is cold, exact, and rigid; he neither yielded to the tears of the Marchioness nor the intreaties of Madame de Martigues. Unfortunately the Count de Piennes was present; he took no part in a contest so very revolting to the mildness of his nature; he was silent from a fear of reanimating the quarrel in attempting to appease it. His silence distressed Madame de Martigues; and the resentment which Themines had excited in her mind, very unjustly fell upon the Count; she demanded of him in a lofty and

ſpirited tone, will you think proper, ſir, to give me your orders, to conſtrain me thus, to treat me with this ſeverity? ſhall I experience your caprices? aſtoniſhed by the queſtion, confounded, his agitation was too great to allow him to make any ſuitable anſwer at the moment; Madame de Martigues ruſhed out of the parlour, left the houſe in an inſtant and threw herſelf into her carriage without looking back upon the Count who had run after her. The unhappy Count! He haſtened here immediately; at his entreaty Madame de Termes is going to paſs the evening at Madame de Martigues' in order to negotiate a treaty of peace. Adieu my friend, continue to love me.

LETTER XLI.

I HAVE paſſed two days at Neuilli with my ſiſter; ſhe had too much company for me. Nothing amuſed, nothing fixed my attention; it appears to me that pleaſure dwells only in ſolitude. I ſhould delight in a ſimple hermitage, at the foot of ſome beautiful mountain whoſe pleaſant ſhade extended acroſs the peaceful vale, remote from noiſe and tumult. What would I do there? What I do in the midſt of Paris, I ſhould dream.

Madame de Montalais is very ill. They think her paſt hope. My God! how my heart beats while I write theſe words. Ah! whence comes it; why? Do I know her ſufficiently to take ſo lively an intereſt in her fate? Alas! ſhe is young; ſhe was happy; with a large fortune, an illuſtrious birth, an amiable huſband, ſo diſtinguiſhed by his perſonal accompliſhments, capable of ſo much regard, attention, ſo much complaiſance! ſhe adored him; had ſhe not reaſon? ... Ah! how much muſt ſhe regret to die! I mourn

for her from the bottom of my heart ..... But let us leave this ſubject, let us leave it immediately. It ought not to occupy my thoughts at this time; I do not wiſh it ſhould.

This evening at ſix o'clock the inſtrument is to be ſigned which is to gratify the long, the ardent wiſhes of the Count de Piennes. I am writing to you while Madame de Termes is arranging our dreſs and ornaments; ſhe is happy in the amuſement ſhe finds in theſe frivolous cares.

Am I going then to deck myſelf—to appear in ſo large a circle? How much conſtraint will it impoſe, how tired I ſhall be! there are moments when negligence and retirement ſuit the ſtate of our hearts .... What a ſpectacle is to be preſented to the feeling Montalais! Ah! what are now his ſufferings! Perhaps at this moment his face is bathed in tears .... I cannot with-hold mine; Ah! how can I paint him afflicted, without partaking of his diſtreſs.—But what do I hear? what noiſe! Saint-Maigrin, Comminges, Themines, what have they to tell? Juſt Heaven! what can have happened?

Four o'clock in the afternoon.

What confuſion? What diſorder! Can it be believed? Surpriſe and anger have taken away all my compoſure. How ſhall I tell you, how expreſs to you .... Madame de Martigues——She cannot be found; no one knows where ſhe is. The imprudent woman, to have ſo little reſpect for her own family, for that of Count de Piennes, to deceive the expectation of all her friends, to go off!.... Yes, ſhe went off this morning at nine o'clock in the full trot of ſix horſes, in her travelling berlin, with but one of her women and three ſervants; her journey is directed, heaven only knows where. I am almoſt breathleſs; this crazy flight is ſo great, ſo provoking an extrava-

gance .... never, never will it be forgotten .... Ah, what will be ſaid of it! how ſhall we excuſe her?

Six o'clock.

Piennes has juſt left me; M. de Termes carries him away; he will not leave him on this intereſting occaſion. His grief is inexpreſſible; one cannot behold him without mingling tears with his. Ah! has Madame de Martigues a heart? has ſhe any feeling? How could ſhe afflict, offend, ſo ſenſible a man whom ſhe had promiſed to render happy? The cruel woman! to overwhelm with ſadneſs her lover, her friends .....I am interrupted every moment.

Eight o'clock.

Every body is ſending here; every body is coming; they load Madame de Termes with queſtions; we look at each other with ſorrow; we dare not raiſe our eyes upon each other.

Twenty two perſons invited to ſup this evening at the houſe of Madame de Martigues, have received this morning a circular card; it informs them ſimply that an important and unforeſeen occaſion has obliged the Counteſs to deprive herſelf of the pleaſure of receiving them to day.

Madame de Thianges cannot be compoſed; the whole family feels inſulted by this ſtrange behaviour. they cannot with-hold their complaints, their regrets. What ſhall be ſaid, what anſwer given? Ah! if ſhe could neglect the rules of decorum, expoſe herſelf without fear to juſt reproaches, forget the world, deſpiſe its malignant conjectures, violate the laws which ſociety impoſe, ought ſhe not to be reſtrained by conſiderations of regard more natural, by ties more intimate? Muſt ſhe afflict her friends, take away from them every juſtification of their attachment?..... An expreſs arrives with letters..... From Madame de Martigues.... Madame de The-

mines..... What! are they together.... and the old Countefs de Themines, has fhe lent her aid!....

Ten o'clock.

I am not able to copy thefe letters. The Chevalier de Termes will undertake it. You fhall have them from his hand. The inconfequent Madame de Martigues! Does fhe imagine what regret fhe caufes? Piennes will die; he cannot be confoled..... Ah! what does Montalais think? fhe had abfolutely promifed to him..... Ah! my friend, what idea will he entertain of the conftant companion and friend of a lady fo full of levity, fo inconfiderate, fo heedlefs! He will think me, perhaps..... Adieu, his heart is afflicted..... and the cenforious Madame de Lugei, what a triumph it is for her!

The letter of MADAME de MARTIGUES to MADAME de SANCERRE.

Look at you, Madame de Termes and yourself, like two simple creatures are you not? I see you with your hands lifted up, in an air of surprise, looking at each other, repeating to yourselves, Gone! My God, is it poffible? Gone away! She? Madame de Martigues! *very well, yes, I am gone. A fine subject to cry out upon! you are accustomed to nothing; every thing astonishes you.*

I have my reasons; if I tell them to you, you will not think them good; I am as willing to be silent; it is necessary to let your first emotions subside. Madame de Termes, I am very sure, is at this moment wiping away the big tears of the poor Count..... *Seriously, is he very sad? I should be sorry if he were; on any other occasion I would partake of his grief. I am very far from being insensible to his feelings.... I must not make you impatient; it is necessary that you listen to me and believe me.*

If I have fled it is his fault. Yes, Madam, it is the fault of M. de Piennes. I esteem him, I love him; it gives me a pleasure to be in his company; I know he has many happy qualities; he has my confidence, he deserves it; but he is not without his faults. For example, this rage to have me marry him, is it excusable? How often have I entreated him to renounce the notion! nothing can persuade him; the title of friend does not suffice for his ardent wishes; he is obstinate in loving me, adoring me, wishing to be my husband! think if my fate is not a sorrowful, a very strange one! Perhaps there is but one constant man in the world, and it is my misfortune to meet him. My dear Madame de Termes do not be anxious; my dear, my much loved Madame de Sancerre, do not assume your grave air; I tell you in the sincerity of my heart, the idea of a husband would make me run to the end of the universe. He is such a familiar fellow, so imperious, has so much to exact! How could I resolve to give a man the right to enter my house at all times as his own? To intrude upon me, to stay, to tire me with his company, to contradict me, to presume, *to* wish, *at last to impose laws? I have not forgotten M. de Martigues, his tone, his authority, his* it must be so, Madam, I desire *it*, this is proper, that I wish, this shall be so, *and so it was.*

I prefer the Count de Piennes to all the men in the world; I love him, yes, I do indeed; but the sentiment he inspires does not give me the least desire to be his, it does not at all weaken the repugnance which keeps me from a bond of subjection. Why then was I going to sign the articles this evening, why, you will ask. Merely to create a little confusion among those who were going to sup at my house, to assist at the wretched ceremony every thought of which has already vanished from my mind. Ah! I should have been in a fine humor afterwards; it would have been a pleasant supper, indeed! very amusing, thirty at the table, the extravagant fondness of the old relations, the broad allusions of the young ones, the tender ecstasies

of the happy Count.... *fy, fy, upon my life I would not preside at such an assembly.*

When you have sufficiently repeated all your lamentations, when you are done exclaming, how fooliſh, how ſtrange! *you will come again, in perfect goodness, to say this foolish woman is my affectionate, my sincere and constant friend. I speak to Madame de Termes. For your part, my charming Countess, heaven has given you a gentle and indulgent heart. Adieu, my dear companions, I already regret the loss of your society. I will write to you often, you will constantly occupy my thoughts; I shall love you always.*

The letter of MADAME de THEMINES to MADAME de SANCERRE.

I am not an accomplice in the astonishing flight of Madame de Martigues. I entreat you to believe it, Madam, to assure the Count de Piennes of it, also Madame de Thianges and especially M. de Themines; I was as much surprised to see Madame de Martigues upon the road to Fontainebleau, as you could have been in learning her departure. She goes to Bourbon. I did not advise this journey, but I cannot conceal the pleasure I feel in having her company along. My mother-in law at first began to scold her, afterwards laughed. So lively a companion, so dear to my heart, will render my residence at Bourbon as agreeable as I had feared it would be tiresome. Adieu, let us not blame her, let us pardon the dear fugitive; persuade Madame de Termes to show us the same indulgence. I love M. de Themines indeed; I love him with all my heart; but.... but I cannot blame a lady, who is free, for avoiding a heavy yoke. The best of husbands is ..... is still a husband.

LETTER XLII.

From MADAME de SANCERRE

THE departure of Madame de Martigues and the despair of Count de Piennes trouble me very much, I assure you. My heart is wounded by every thing which I hear said of it. Madame de Termes and myself do not leave Madame de Thianges; her tender friendship confines her to her brother. Yesterday, they said, he was overcome; I found him frantic. On seeing me, he made the most mournful cries; he listens to nothing that is said; makes no answer; weeps, exclaims; when he speaks it is nothing to the purpose, quite flighty and extravagant. His situation is sorrowful; it affects me, makes me very uneasy; indeed it distresses me. While he is thus giving himself up to despair, Madame de Martigues is amusing herself at Bourbon; Themines has just sent me a letter from her. He has read it with displeasure, as is evident from his note. As you desire to know *all her reasons*, read the copy of this letter.

The letter of MADAME DE MARTIGUES to the MARQUIS DE THEMINES.

You need not suspect Madame de Themines of a secret intelligence with the guilty! *you need not pout, Sir, much less make any hard reproaches. With all the reason, with all the justice of which you boast so much, you are often very much in the wrong; you have your humor, your will, and a great deal of obstinacy, Sir. If the Count de Piennes complains of me, he is unjust. It is of you he ought to complain, of you alone, my dear Marquis. In exiling your gentle, submissive companion, in speaking to her in your very absolute tone, in resisting her entreaties and her tears, you have enlightened me upon the danger to which I was about to expose myself; you have recalled me to myself; I tremble to think*

that in a few days M. de Piennes would have had the power to excite my tears, and see them flow without emotion. I am infinitely obliged to you, Sir, for having been so inflexible, so unmannerly, so haughty, so insupportable; I love you the better for it, and you ought to count upon my gratitude.

They say at Paris a great many ill things, do they not? Tell Saint-Maigrin to write me all the news, and begin with the tattle of which I am the subject. The wise Madame de Lugei, the sententious Madame de Thore, the weak Marshaless ..... Oh, the old prudes! they ought indeed to love me! How busy my little history will make them; how they will run, look up one another, tell their silly stories, slanders! How it will reanimate, enliven the insipid circle! what comments, what insinuations! How I shall laugh at them all!

Apropos, console the Count de Piennes, assure him of my esteem, of my tenderest friendship. In his first emotions he will tell you, begone; he will listen to nothing. He is unreasonable, ungrateful, yes ungrateful; Ah! if a regard, a concern for his happiness did not interest me, why, for these two years, should I have refused to marry him? why should I have feared to see him unhappy! This poor Count, he mourns, he cries, they say; if he were my husband, he would perhaps be forever in despair. Ah! my God, I do every thing with the best intention, believe me, I do. Do not quarrel with Madame de Themines; she was ignorant of my design; I protest to you she was, if you doubt it, I shall be offended with you forever.

From MADAME DE SANCERRE.

What a ſtyle! what levity! ſhe does not conſider how many feeling hearts are intereſted in her conduct; never was gaiety more miſplaced ..... A meſſenger from Madame de Comminges .... a note from her, and one from her huſband .... Alas! they have

to inform me .... Madame de Montalais .... what! my friend, Madame de Montalais is dead. Yes, this night at three o'clock, in the arms of her husband, her head reclined upon his bosom, loading him with the most affectionate benedictions, and bidding him the most sorrowful, heart-rending adieus, she died. My hand refuses to trace the expressions of Comminges .... How much am I affected!

Oh! the feeling, the affectionate, generous Montalais! to receive the last sighs, to hear the last accents .... with what distress must his heart be pierced! Comminges was with him; he waited at this fatal moment to take him from the house; he conducted him to Plessis; Madame de Comminges is going there, to meet her husband and console her amiable kinsman; the rights of consanguinity authorise this attention, sorrowful indeed but interesting. Why may not friendship be allowed what the most distant relationship renders proper and natural. Ah! why am I not a relation of the Marquis, why not his sister! I might then be present with him, speak to him, partake of his griefs, mingle my tears with his. I have a thousand times wished he were my brother; you will not believe it perhaps, but nothing is more true. How happy should I be to have it in my power to say to him, without blushing for the avowal, *you are dear to me, I love you.*

Struck by this death, affected, I weep .... A lively sentiment arises in my mind; I do not know what, I cannot define it. Never did I experience ... Ah! my dear Count, whence does it proceed, whence is it that I weep? Tell me then, why I cannot restrain my tears. They are abundant, but not distressing; I feel a gentle satisfaction, in indulging them. Perhaps the sadness which our compassion excites, is without pain, without agitation; it does not carry us far from ourselves, on the contrary it brings us back to think ..... What would I say? I know not.

Adieu. I wish to tell you.... but..... I can write no more.

LETTER XLIII.

I AM this moment going to set out for Bourbon. M. de Termes goes there with me; we shall proceed without stopping. The poor Count de Piennes is in danger; he has a high fever and terrible convulsions; he refuses all assistance, is rude to every one, drives all away who approach him. His sister gives him up, he calls, unceasingly, upon Madame de Martigues, thinks he sees her, speaks to her, he makes her the mildest reproaches, asks her pardon for having obliged her to absent herself, entreats her to forget his love, promises never to importune her on the subject again, then he gives vent to the most bitter complaints, he wishes to run after her, to bring her back, to marry her, or stab himself before her eyes. Four of his servants can scarcely hold him in his bed.

His condition afflicts my heart, he may die. Great God! if so sorrowful an event should proceed from her imprudent flight, what grief, what remorse would poison the days of Madame de Martigues! The goodness of her heart is well known to me, she is heedless, but not cruel. I am going to look for her. An express, letters continually sent, cannot persuade her to return, no other person has the influence over her mind which she permits me to have; I owe this step to friendship..... but they call me away, Termes is ready, I must leave you. Adieu.

LETTER XLIV.

I RETURNED yesterday very late; on entering my house I found a note from M. de Montalais,

it was the answer to an ordinary civility; I did not doubt it, but his well known hand, my name written by him, gave me so great an emotion, that my trembling fingers could scarcely break the seal. Read the copy of this note.

The Marquis of Montalais to Madame de Sangerre.

The part which you deign to take in my affliction, Madam, is indeed capable of softening its severity. What a consolation to receive the proofs of your remembrance, of your goodness! What! you weep for me! you, Madam! Ah! cherish this generous feeling! I have long deserved your compassion. Shall a day hereafter be permitted me.... May I presume, Madam..... No, my heart dares yet express only the sentiments of gratitude and respect.

Yes, without doubt, he will be permitted to express all the feelings of his soul; with what pleasure shall I listen to his avowal! Is he not worthy of all my tenderness? Sure of being heard, ah! let him speak; my heart and my hand shall be the reward of his constant affection. No my friend, no, I will not make him purchase by distressing doubts the good I destine for him. I despise the little artifices of self love. I dislike a woman that is capable of afflicting the man she loves, when honor does not forbid her to be sincere, to render him happy. I can say to M. de Montalais, *I place my happiness in adding to yours.* But will he speak? will he dare to speak? He thinks me so haughty, so indifferent..... Ah! what a fear! why give myself up to it? What a propensity I have to distress myself!

I am much fatigued with my journey, I have brought back Madame de Martigues. Surprised at seeing me, struck with the occasion of my coming, affected by my reproaches, she did not hesitate to

follow me. Her impatience upon the road, her dejection, her fears in coming into Paris have sufficiently convinced me that she had no design to distress her friends or her lover. Her presence, her tears, her consoling promises have produced the effect we expected from them. The pleasure of seeing her again has restored the Count de Piennes to himself; he no more wishes to die; he eagerly accepts the aid he refused; his fever is considerably abated, hope revives him, and in a few days he will be well. Adieu; I am going to seek the repose I am much in need of. Madame de Comminges writes me that the Marquis de Montalais is very sad, very solitary; he is forming, she says, the *strangest projects*. What does she mean by this expression? Adieu.

LETTER XLV.

I CANNOT suffer in a reasonable man any unjust prejudice. You have a very false idea of the sentiments of Madame de Martigues; she loves the Count de Piennes, she really fears to render him unhappy, by giving herself to him. He has loved me so long, said she to me yesterday, he has so eagerly desired to obtain me, he has been so much in the habit of seeking to please me, of occupying himself with endeavours to conquer my resistance; his imagination so greatly exaggerates the charms of his triumph, that this love, so tender, so passionate, will have perhaps the same fate with those strong and ardent wishes, the accomplishment of which ever fall far short of the expectation. Ah! how is the void to be filled? what shall compensate for the loss of those amiable illusions? He will cease to love me; accustomed to reign over his heart, how shall I support his indifference. I shall hate him if he dares to shew it. We shall both complain; weariness will

render him wretched, ſpite and vanity will make me a fury. Think what a fate our friends are wiſhing for us.

But let us leave Madame de Martigues, let me ſpeak of myſelf, my dear Count. I am going to aſtoniſh you. I am delighted, can you gueſs how? with my ſteward. The tireſome papers which hitherto I could never bring myſelf to read over on ſigning, are now before me, I am pleaſed in calculating my revenue, it is much augmented by the attention and expert management of the honeſt Raimond, and I have to thank you for giving him to me. In treating my tenants with gentleneſs, in remitting a few of my rights, I now enjoy a yearly income of 210,000 livres. Ah! how intereſted am I becoming in my eſtate! we know the value of riches only in wiſhing to ſpread them, to ſhare them with our friends, to give the poſſeſſion of them to another. For the firſt time in my life, I contemplate with ſatisfaction, with delight, that my fortune is conſiderable, that it is an independent one, that I can diſpoſe of it.

M. de Montalais muſt ſoon return to Paris, it is indeed aſtoniſhing that Madame de Martigues ſays nothing to me of him. They write however; I know it. She uſed to talk to me of him at a time when her ſilence would have been more proper. At preſent, what reſtrains her?——But the illneſs of Count de Piennes occupies her; this is natural indeed. Good heaven! how I am moved in thinking of this return of the Marquis! What! ſhall I ſee him again? will he ſpeak to me? Adieu. You neglect me too much, two poſts have arrived without your letters.

LETTER XLVI.

MAY I ſpeak to you of myſelf, my dear Count; can I ſpeak to you of others? there are mo-

ments when all our ideas are concentered in ourſelves; when we perceive nothing in the univerſe but ourſelves, our own wiſhes, their object! A gentle hope had calmed the agitations of my heart, agreeable ſchemes filled my mind; now I am uneaſy. Madame de Comminges has juſt written to me I do not know what ſhe wiſhes to make me underſtand; I comprehend nothing in her letter, preciſely nothing, and yet this letter troubles me, agitates me. M. de Montalais, ſhe ſays, is ſtill dejected, ſtill thoughtful and ſad; ſtill *dwelling on the ſingularity of a ſtep which he ſhould blame himſelf much for taking.* She would imagine, that he regrets the loſs of that fortune of which he is deprived by the death of his wife, *if the propoſitions of the Count de Roye* did not abſolutely preclude this idea.

What does Madame de Comminges mean to ſay? the heir of the Marchioneſs makes propoſitions ..... Ah! of what kind are they? the Count de Roye has a niece, very young, ſhe is yet at the convent. Does he wiſh..... Can it be.... She is the heir of the Marſhaleſs de Roye; they call her charming..... Ah! my God! Madame de Comminges ought indeed to explain herſelf or be ſilent!

How in an inſtant are the feelings of the heart changed! How much do the bleſſings of life depend on the imagination. Ah! why was mine yeſterday amuſed with ſuch flattering ideas? whence aroſe the delightful emotions? How the letter of Madame de Comminges has deſtroyed the ſweet illuſion which was beginning to ſeduce, to charm my heart! I was rejoicing in my freedom, my wealth; have I not ſtill theſe advantages; has any one torn them from me? Ah! what is it then that I regret? I never could like the Count de Roye. Do you not think as I do? I hate theſe active tempers, theſe eager, officious people, whoſe importunate zeal is not ſo much a proof of attachment as the effect of their reſtleſs humor, of

the neceſſity they feel of having ſomething to do: their friendſhip is ever in motion, would always ſhew itſelf, always be of ſervice; it intrudes, embarraſſes; is often deſtructive; how many delight in troubleſome intrigues merely from the warmth of a tender intereſt! My dear Count, this ſort of *friendſhip* begets ingratitude, and indeed deſerves it. I have received one of your letters; you congratulate me. Alas! for what? I am loved, you ſay? I flatter myſelf no more. I once thought that this idea would have filled my ſoul with fear; but lately it afforded an inexpreſſible ſatisfaction; alas! it has now fled; it is effaced; too truly do I ſpeak; I ſcarcely dare to wiſh an elucidation.

The propoſition of the Count de Roye, the long abſence of the Marquis, his profound ſadneſs, the ſilence of Madame de Martigues, every thing alarms me, afflicts me; and you do not return? New engagements ſtill detain you? In telling me this, you double my diſtreſs. Adieu.

LETTER XLVII.

IT was not neceſſary to laugh at my fears, to joke upon the *ſuſpicions of ſenſible hearts*. My conjectures were too true. My fate is decided; yes, my dear Count, abſolutely decided. I was born unfortunate; I ſhall ever be ſo.

The Count de Roye, the preſſing Count de Roye, offers his niece to M. de Montalais, with the eſtate of his firſt wife and all the fortune of the young heireſs. The behaviour of the Count is very diſintereſted, very noble, it is admired, boaſted of. It ſeems that his niece muſt be the only perſon capable of repairing the loſſes of the Marquis. they applaud this *generous friendſhip*. Comminges is full of

it; he has fatigued Madame de Thianges with a long and tireſome letter on the ſubject. He conſiders the offer as accepted, he ſays; and without doubt it is. For what reaſon ſhould it be re'ected? And why ſhould Comminges ſpeak of it? Do they announce an affair of this kind when it is not certain? A marriage thus confided, is a marriage reſolved upon and fixed.

Ah! what have I done my dear Count, what have I done? To what a fatal paſſion has my heart abandoned itſelf! M. de Montalais was engaged; how imprudent! I loved him; I wept. He is free, and I ſtill weep! New ties are going to be formed which will forever take away the hope I had of being his, of yet loving ..... Ah! why did I not avoid him, why have I not fled? What vain conſiderations have detained me! But did I ſuſpect my heart of ſo much weakneſs?

Before I ſaw this dangerous man, I thought myſelf ſure of maintaining my indifference. Thoſe who ſhowed me their deſire to triumph over it, appeared as open enemies whoſe plans it was eaſy to diſconcert. I armed myſelf againſt them with that diſtruſt which aroſe from the unhappineſs of my firſt engagements; a ſad experience defended me from the charm of this delightful, this cruel paſſion. Senſible to friendſhip alone, I enjoyed the certainty of having inſpired it, the ſatisfaction of reciprocating it, my tranquil and happy days glided into a peaceful calm; the cloſe of each day left me in the hope that the next would bring the ſame uninterrupted pleaſures. Ah! how different was this time from that which is marked with trouble, with agitation! I did not think myſelf in danger; I was not attacked; I did not ſuſpect a lover concealed under the character of a friend; too late have I examined my heart.

A *lover concealed*; and upon what authority is this title given? Madame de Martigues has amuſed me; he does not love me ..... Ah! I would wiſh to be alone in the univerſe, to ſee no one, to care for nobody! every thing wounds me, every body is troubleſome.—The looks of curioſity ſeem anxious to penetrate the diſtreſſing ſecret of my ſoul ..... I will retire to the furtheſt extremity of my eſtate; I will live there unknown; I wiſh to renounce the world where one is ſo apt to wander, where under the inviting appearance of pleaſure, regret and bitterneſs are ever concealed. My friend, do not diſſuade me from this reſolution ..... Ah! my God, muſt we be further ſeparated. Your affectionate conſolations are ſo much wanted! Adieu. Pity me, pity me I pray you.

LETTER XLVIII.

AH! partake of my joy; the gentleſt hopes grow up in my heart. You are right, my dear Count, I am loved; I can no more doubt it, I wiſh never again to doubt it. Amiable, generous Montalais! He refuſes her, yes, he refuſes Mademoiſelle de Roye. Her youth, her fortune are not to be put in competition with the *tender ſentiments another inſpires. Another*; Ah! my God what other?

Madame de Thianges this moment leaves me; ſhe has ſhewn me a letter from Comminges. I have read it ten times; I cannot read it often enough. *An ardent and ſecret paſſion engroſſes, he ſays, the heart of the Marquis; he avows it without naming the object; to refuſe a lady of ſixteen, noble, rich and handſome is indeed to make a great ſacrifice. I know of but one perſon who appears to be worthy of M. de Montalais. Striking reſemblances of character muſt naturally unite their*

hearts .... I cannot be more explicit; I wish not to deceive myself. Shew my letter, I pray you, to Madame de Sancerre. Her penetration may be useful. Ask her if she will assist me in guessing this person so secretly, so truly loved.

I cannot express to you my surprise at being named. I blushed; my heart beat with violence. I dared not raise my eyes; I feared the questions of Madame de Thianges; but more occupied by the interests of her brother, than attentive to my emotions, she asked me if Comminges had said any thing of Madame de Martigues. I assured her, no, and her curiosity extended no further.

The Marquis is going into Languedoc with the Count de Roye; their affairs are almost settled. Before his departure he will come to Paris. After so long an absence, so hard a restraint, what a pleasure will it give me to see him again, to read in his looks, less timid, less constrained, this *passion* which *engrosses his heart*. What! will he speak to me? shall I hear the sound of his dear voice? will he declare his love; and I listen to it without a blush? shall I be permitted to raise my eyes upon him full of tenderness and satisfaction? can I recompense him for the sacrifice he has made for me? ..... Good God! how rapidly does hope disperse the dark cloud which fear has formed! How quickly do our wishes trace the most smiling images of delight! Ah! let us not efface them; let us enjoy at least these delicious illusions; let us leave our senses in the full charm they bring; they deceive us perhaps; but what of this, they give us a real pleasure!

My friend, I have need of all your indulgence. I reason ill; do I not? but to write to you in those moments when I am not myself, is to give you a decided proof of my confidence. Adieu.

LETTER XLIX.

ALL is changed, all is loſt. My hopes are buried, my ſchemes of happineſs have vaniſhed; I have only the ſhame left of having yielded to my fooliſh paſſion.

Madame de Commiages came yeſterday from Pleſſis, to which place ſhe returns to-morrow; ſhe arrived at my houſe. This haſte to ſee me excited in my mind a thouſand flattering ideas; I recollected the letter of Comminges; his wife had juſt left the Marquis; was going to ſpeak to me of him,..... Ah! how my thoughts wandered! I deſired, I dreaded an intereſting explanation; my hopes were cruelly deceived!——My friend, will you believe it? M. de Montalais is attached to no one here; he wiſhes to retire far from the court; he is going to his ſeat in the country, to ſhut himſelf up there, to live alone..... Ah, the ungrateful man! does he know that he had friends?

We have greatly miſtaken the character of this man, too much boaſted of. He has not that ſuperiority which has been attributed to him. Where is then this *greatness of ſoul*, where theſe *elevated ſentiments*, this *unalterable independence?* What! does he feel himſelf humbled at the diminution of his fortune? Does he bluſh to appear again with leſs eclat, does he regret the vain pomp he ſeemed ſo much to deſpiſe?——But Mademoiſelle de Roye was going to reſtore theſe advantages, to add new eſtates..... He has refuſed her, ſacrificed her, and for whom? He is in love ſays Comminges; he can have little eſteem for the object of his love, if he is not willing to owe her..... It is all a myſtery to me. He refuſes Mademoiſelle de Roye and goes to live at Montalais. He, to go away, to leave us, forſake us forever! What paſſion, what ſacrifice is ſpoken of? Why is my name mentioned? And the penetrating, prophetic Ma-

dame de Martigues, so well instructed, so certain of the sentiments of her *sensible friend*. Where did she take her ideas? how did she dare to tell me, to repeat to me *he loves you, he adores you, he is unhappy*? What proof had she of this? ..... Ah, me! my dear Count, how could I alarm myself so long at a love which I have not inspired? Why have I construed the simple marks of esteem into proofs of a tender sentiment? Seduced by my own weakness ... . I have no confidence in myself. All my reflections are afflicting, humiliating. Of whom can I complain; Alas! my own wishes have alone deceived me.

But what spread over the countenance of M. de Montalais this affecting, expressive languor? Why could he never speak to me without concern, without emotion? Why did he seem to fear me? Comminges speaks without the least hesitation; *he is in love*, he says. Ah! whom then does he love? Why ask me to assist him in his conjectures? Am I connected with the lady? Is it my misfortune to be her friend? ——But if he is in love, Why does he wish to bury himself in his retreat?

You see, my dear Count, I am destined not to know the most agreeable sentiments without the bitterest distress, I ought to submit to my capricious fortune, happy at least in having been able to conceal from every eye my indiscreet fondness. There will not be an ungrateful man to triumph over my tears, my regrets; he will not know that he was dear to me, that he is still dear to me and ever will be so; yes, ever! I will weep on his account, I do not wish to forget him. Adieu. Do not aggravate my grief by your replies. Reason contradicts the heart, but does not persuade it.

LETTER L.

YOUR remark is juſt, my dear Count, my poſition changes every inſtant. It might be ſaid that a buſy, malignant genius takes a pleaſure in diſturbing my ſoul, calming and agitating it again; my heart is conſtantly moved by fear or hope; pain and pleaſure are introduced by turns, and ſometimes they are both felt together.

Madame de Martigues, Madame de Thianges and the Count de Plennes have been at Pleſſis. It is on return from this little journey that Madame de Martigues has at laſt been pleaſed to break the aſtoniſhing ſilence ſhe has kept ever ſince the death of the Marchioneſs. She has broken it for the ſole purpoſe of quarrelling, with all that vivacity of which you know ſhe is capable.

Her reproaches and her anger appeared to me very unjuſt. In preventing the viſit of Madame de Comminges and M. de Montalais, my two friends had thought that I would accompany them to Pleſſis; how could I permit myſelf to take ſuch a ſtep! Madame de Martigues is abſolutely vexed at my refuſal; ſhe returns in a very ill-humor indeed. M. de Montalais will go, ſhe ſays, he will *run from Madame de Sancerre*; he knows ſhe is *indifferent, inſenſible, proud*; his reaſon will determine him to combat, to conquer his affection, to meet no more the object of an *uſeleſs paſſion*, a paſſion deſtined never to be returned, never to be fortunate.

How unadviſedly does Madame de Martigues act! He wiſhes to retire to a diſtance and it is of me ſhe complains! What! can ſhe not detain him, encourage him to hope, perſuade him not to forſake us without being aſſured——? What! my friend, the Marquis de Montalais believes me inſenſible? he who has cauſed me to ſhed ſo many tears, does he

think me *proud, indifferent;* Alas! I am ſtill deſtined not to be known.

I wiſhed to open my heart to my perverſe friend; but ſome one interrupted us. I am loved; it is a dear, conſoling certainty; what is there yet to ſeparate me from the Marquis? Does it become me to remove the barrier? can I take a ſingle ſtep. Our ſex is not permitted?——Does not Madame de Martigues ſuſpect the ſtate of my heart? how much have I feared the penetration of M. de Montalais! what care have I taken to conceal from him the tender impreſſion!——Now I would wiſh——I know not what——Yet if you were here! Ah! My God! what a deſtiny is mine. Adieu.

LETTER LI.

OH! how my ſenſes are agitated! M. Montalais is at Paris; he arrived yeſterday very late at the houſe of Count de Piennes; Madame de Martigues writes me this; her note contains nothing elſe; indeed Madame de Martigues becomes inſupportable.

He is here, himſelf! Every hour, every moment may bring him to my ſight; and will he not ſeek me? will he have the caprice to avoid me? Surely he cannot diſpenſe with ſeeing me; politeneſs will not permit him.——My dear Count, how my heart beats, the leaſt noiſe occaſions a violent palpitation——Ah, from whence does it proceed? why this ſtrange emotion? I have ſo much deſired the return of this amiable man, I have drawn ſo many delightful images of the firſt moment when my eyes ſhould be fixed on his—now I fear——Alas! if he ſhould come to bid me a laſt adieu, if this moment, ſo much wiſhed for, ſhould become the moſt cruel of my

life——what do I hear? a carriage enters, it is in mourning—it is—it is he. I am breathleſs. Ah! me, how fooliſh!

Nine o'clock in the evening.

You imagine me penetrated with the livelieſt joy, or given up to the profoundeſt ſadneſs. It is not either, not at all, I am—what? I know not how to expreſs what I am. What muſt he thought of ſuch conduct? paſſionate in his letters, cold in his converſation, the marquis—he does not love me, he no longer loves me. The honeſty of his heart has forced him for a long time to combat his inclination. He has at length triumphed over it, without doubt. Men have a happy temper, they ſeldom retain a deſire which they cannot gratify; and then he has heard, no doubt, of my *indifference*, my *pride*——I wiſh no more to love him, I wiſh I had never ſeen him.

How different have I found him from himſelf! ſerious, embarraſſed, his looks wandered over every part of my perſon, he ſeemed anxious to avoid meeting mine. Obliging queſtions did not open his heart to confidence. If Madame de Termes had not entered, a mournful ſilence would have ſucceeded to the moſt languid converſation.

I am to ſup in company with him this evening at the houſe of Madame de Thianges; and is this becauſe I could not excuſe myſelf? But what pretence ſhall I make, what imagine?—All my diſpoſitions are changed. I do not know that I have a ſingle wiſh; my feelings are almoſt extinguiſhed. Oh! what an ill mood to be in! Madame de Termes is here, ſhe is reading while ſhe waits for me. We go together. If I may believe myſelf, I have the head-ach, the vapours—Let us go, I will believe nothing. Adieu.

LETTER LII.

MONS. de Montalais is incomprehenſible. I have often told you; one does not know him. He is extremely reſerved; he is pleaſed to keep his friends in uncertainty; no one knows any thing of his deſigns; he ſays nothing of the part he wiſhes to take; this manner is inſupportable; I no longer love him; I believe I hate him; and Madame de Martigues, perfectly reſerved, perfectly myſterious, thinks proper to be *prudent*, not to *interfere in the affairs of others*; ſhe alſo diſtreſſes me.

To ſeek me with ſo much eagerneſs, to ſee me every day, and to be ſilent, to ſay nothing to me! No, he has not ſaid any thing. What does he mean! Is it for me to ſeek an explanation? Ah! let him go, let him ſtay away, his conduct, his views, himſelf, all become very indifferent.

To be ſilent, perſeveringly ſilent! What can be the reaſon of his ſilence? Why does he repreſs his feelings? Yes, he does repreſs them. All his actions diſcover a lively inquietude. My friend, his ſoul is agitated; his eyes are fixed upon me, he ſighs, opens his lips, is about to ſpeak, he hentates, ſuddenly he ſtrides to a diſtance from me, and when he returns, it is with an air of having gained a victory over himſelf, or eſcaped from ſome imminent danger.

Can you imagine?——Ah! what a ſad thought riſes in my mind. He fears me, perhaps! Some falſe tale has prejudiced him againſt my temper; Sancerre was thought to be ſo unfortunate! without doubt the Marquis dreads a wife. Some one enters, Good God! it is he.

Eight o'clock in the evening.

So moved, ſo affected, ſo charmed!——Shall I write? yes, I will haſten to impart to the boſom of my ſincere friend, a part of the joy which fills mine.

He has at last spoken——Ah! if love causes uneasiness, what delicious sensations does it also occasion! My dear Count, partake of my happiness. The Marquis de Montalais loves me, adores me; he has declared it, repeated it, and I believe and am sure of it.——And has he indeed declared it? I do not know, my agitation was so great!——To see him at my feet; to feel my hands gently prelled between his, to read in his animated eyes all those sentiments which the tongue scarcely dares to express; his sighs, an eloquent silence, his tears——Ah! my friend, what a moment; I wept; he threw his arm around me; my head inclined upon my bosom; I spoke, I know not what I said; his gratitude, his transports, apprised me that the secret of my heart had escaped. Ah! I will no longer conceal my sensibility; I have suffered too much already, from so painful a constraint. I take a pleasure in saying, in repeating that I love Montalais; I am going to be his companion, his happy companion. Ah! my God, the emotion by which I have just been agitated, has dispelled my sadness. I was afflicted, I am beloved; with what rapidity a single moment has effaced the remembrance of regrets the most lively, the most recent! Grief and the idea of Montalais can never be presented to my mind at the same time. By a confession which I interrupted, entreating that the subject may never be renewed, I have learned the reason of his silence. My fortune prevented the avowal of his love. He should not have feared that suspicions would have been excited respecting the motives of his suit. Every one knows the nobleness of his soul, I am going then to unite myself to the man I love, to gratify all the wishes of a heart, tender, sensible, generous, constant. Ah! my friend, what a smiling prospect opens before me. Well may you tell me, *I told you of this, I was right. You should have believed me.* Ah! indeed I do now believe you. Adieu.

LETTER LIII.

THE details! you aſk the details, my dear Count? If I were to yield to your requeſt I ſhould appear to you out of my ſenſes; my ſoul is in that ſweet intoxication which cannot be ſpoken. And ſince I have ſo long tired you with my griefs, ſhall I fatigue you now with my joy? We ſpeak eaſily of our diſtreſs; there is uniformity in the ſentiment; but how is pleaſure to be told? Who can ſketch its light and rapid traces? We feel this pleaſure; the glowing heart acknowleges its gentle impulſe; it paſſes away, it is renewed, it eſcapes reflection; to wiſh to examine it is to loſe it in a moment, to diminiſh it perhaps, too often, indeed, to deſtroy it.

We are to be married at the end of this month, without oſtentation; decency requires that this ſhould be diſpenſed with. A diſpute of intereſt yeſterday came near to break the match. M. de Montalais perſiſted in wiſhing to leave me the ſeparate right to my whole fortune and the entire diſpoſal of it. He refuſed to have the property veſted in him. What a pleaſure would he have withheld. I could never have conſented to give him my hand without the fortunate addition of my eſtate, which might repair the loſs of his. The Count de Piennes offers to be the arbiter of this difference. M. de Termes and he will draw the articles according to my directions. I wiſh that M. de Montalais ſhould be rich, ſhould be independent. If heaven one day deprive him of a wife, choſen by his heart, his regrets will all be for her..... But what a ſombre thought! Madame de Martigues comes in very apropos, to divert me.

From MADAME DE MARTIGUES.

She is going to aſk you if you do not admire her talents at negotiation? Oh! I have had the greateſt difficulty..... Madame de Sancerre and M. de Mon-

talais have troubled me beyond all expreſſion; A hundred times did I think of giving them up. So much reſerve on one ſide, ſo much reſpect and timidity on the other; ſuch grave lovers, ſo ſad, wretched; They did not dare to look at each other, could not ſpeak; and yet if you will permit me to ſay it, they loved each other to a folly! I have united them, I have rendered them happy; think how much they are delighted, charmed! In return for my cares, my friendſhip, the ungrateful couple would perſuade me to my ruin. They have made me ſign, by ſurpriſe I believe, the dreadful contract ..... Well, the die is caſt, and I muſt accompany Madame de Sancerre to the altar. This aſtoniſhes you, me alſo; but ſo it is. Count de Piennes has abſolutely loſt his wits; he will, *marry or die*. Oh! he ſhall not die; he ſhall marry; I ſay ſo, I ſwear it; the decree is irrevocable..... poor Piennes! what a loſs does he venture to incur? I am his friend; he wiſhes me to be his wife; what a difference! I pity him from my heart; I cannot look upon him as my huſband without giving myſelf up to compaſſion. I have not, however, to reproach myſelf for having adviſed ſuch an ill affair. I have tried all in my power to avert it; it is the moſt wretched fancy! ..... Adieu. Congratulate me on the marriage of Madame de Sancerre and conſole me for my own.

LETTER LIV.

YOUR letter has given me extreme pleaſure. Every thing you ſay of the Marquis enchants me. *He alone merited my heart? I was the only woman worthy of poſſeſſing it?* my friend, this eulogy is great indeed! To be thought worthy of a man ſo deſerving of eſteem, is to gain a flattering reward; on ample recompence for thoſe virtues which are ſo difficult in practice.

M. de Montalais has just left me. He goes with the Count de Roye to make some necessary arrangements for the settlement of their affairs. As mutual confidence and friendship unite them, the talk will soon be accomplished. Already do I feel a little sadness; I do not wish to indulge it, and in order to dispel the gloom which it may bring, I am going to tell you of a very extraordinary character who has lately made his appearance here, and will communicate to you the most impertinent letter you have ever heard of. I went yesterday with Madame de Martigues to a silk merchant's to look at some new articles which had been lately imported. A stranger quite remarkable for his costly and singular dress was examining some embroidered silks; he found them all bad, refused them all, talked a great deal, bought nothing and threw the lady of the shop into despair.

Picture to yourself a man of about thirty years of age, of an overgrown figure, a complexion extremely swarthy, large staring eyes, an open countenance, good enough, an awkward air, loud quick voice, an ill carriage, expressing himself with harshness and adding now and then a few polite words to his uncouth and confused phrases.

Madame de Martigues amused herself highly in listening to him, thought him pleasant, laughed at what he said, and at the embarrassment of the lady who was extremely hurried, tired, fatigued, wished to wait on us, and complained that she was detained by the *gentleman*. She named us both, and I heard with surprise this *gentleman* exclaim, *Madame de Sancerre, who? the Countess de Sancerre?* In speaking this, he threw upon the floor twenty pieces of silks, rushed towards us, looked steadily at me, leaned against a pillar of the room which stood near us, remained unmoved, with his eyes fixed upon me, his mouth half open, appearing like a man petrified.

DE

Madame de Martigues burst into a loud laughter; the sort of savage was not at all affected by it; troubled by his presence, I deferred my purchases till another time and advanced to go out. The odd being, recovering the recollection he had seemingly lost, hastened to put himself in my way, presented me his hand and, bowing very low, begged *the permission*, the *honor*, *the gratification*, the *felicity* to help me to descend the steps. I was afraid to mortify him by a refusal; he conducted me to my carriage, pronouncing his words very inarticulately and exclaiming, *Madam! .... Enchanted! who could have told me? What a lucky rencounter! I was just going to ..... All is changed. Shall I have the honor .... To wish you well ..... I cannot speak, my joy confounds me.*

A splendid carriage was waiting for him at the door, surrounded by negro servants handsomely dressed, with their carcanets and rich caps. Madame de Martigues sent back to ask his name; but the merchant did not know it. At four o'clock I received this astonishing letter.

The letter of MONS. DE MORINZER to MADAME DE SANCERRE.

MADAM,

IT is the fashion here to make use of much turning and many round-about ways to explain one's self. At the end of an hour you find nothing said. I speak to be understood. And this it is I have to say. I love you with all my heart. I have twice made the tour of the world; I have seen women of all countries, of all complexions; but from one pole to the other they may search in vain for your equal. The lady who accompanied you this morning is beautiful; she may laugh as much as she pleases; but, upon my word, she is not to be compared with you. Let us come to the purpose.

I am well born, have scarcely any care, and am in possession of a large fortune, Six millions of livres.

jewels and trinkets, as many of them as you may wish, one hundred slaves to wait upon you, superb plantations in the finest part of the world, a husband, yet young, frank, clever, valiant, will this suit you, Madam? You must answer me quickly, if you please, for I have to re-cross the seas very soon. Speak true, at once, and I will arrange my affairs accordingly. A matter of importance has brought me here, it related in some sort to you; now it relates to you in a very different manner. This you will not understand; I must explain it to you hereafter.

I have the honor to be, Madam, with the profoundest respect, with the liveliest and most ardent passion, your very humble servant, CHARLES MORINERE.

Your answer immediately. Will you have me? Will you not have me? Say yes or no.

What do you think of this letter? Never did a lady receive the like; surely the man is insane. Madame de Martigues dined here; she has thought it very pleasant to write *no* upon a sheet of paper, and send it to him for an answer. I would rather have sent none. Adieu, my dear Count; I am persuaded to go to the opera. Madame de Termes does not like to see me so thoughtful; she will not suffer me to sigh; the ungrateful woman! How often have I left her to weep, to groan; she remembers nothing of it.

LETTER LV.

MONS. de Montalais will not return so soon as was expected. The Marshal de Saint-Geran, his uncle is very ill at one of his estates near Poitiers; he wishes anxiously to see him; the Marquis goes there and his return will depend upon the death or recovery of this relation.

Ah! my God! obstacles constantly occur, regret always awaits me! I am sensibly grieved at his absence, more so indeed than heretofore; and this foolish fellow from over sea, do you suppose I am yet relieved from his impertinence? No, he obstinately persists in his extravagant passion. Would you imagine that he has had the audacity to present himself ten times at my door; he has just written to me again. I would have returned his letter unopened, but it was brought to me at Madame de Martigues; his style is enchanting, she said, and hastily broke the seal. I am surprised that such fools should think of addressing themselves to me. See, I pray you, the style which enchants Madame de Martigues.

The letter of Mons. de Morinzer to Madame de Sancerre.

No! you are short, Madam; the French are reckoned polite; this answer however does not look much like it. I deserve a little more respect, Madam, as you may soon find. I did not come here to fall in love with you; this is a misfortune which has happened since my arrival; it ought not to draw upon me your disdain. I can bring you a name which is worth at least as much as yours. I do not threaten; but hear me; I am resolved to marry you or ruin you, and I wish the first was as much in my power as is the last.

I ask to see you, to speak to you, to make myself known. I can present myself every where, and at your house I have the best right to be admitted. Will you receive me? Write again no, *and you are ruined, sunk down forever; I shall be sorry for it; but I have my honor, and will do what I ought.*

If this man were not a fool, his insolence would merit the severest punishment; but he is deranged; he inspires me with pity rather than with anger. To *ruin* me, *sink me forever!* and this idea of marrying me, of being able to present himself at my house with

the *best right to be admitted?* But how is it that this unfortunate man is abandoned to himself? Is no one interested for him? My friend, a fool always excites in my mind the most sorrowful, humiliating reflections! What! another letter..... Ah! my friend, I am undone! this is not a fool; he is worse; he is ...., Great God, is it possible! At what a time..... dreadful reverse! When I was just going to dispose of .... Read, my dear Count, read, know the whole extent of my misfortune.

To MADAME DE SANCERRE.

No answer? Your door always shut? You still treat me with pride, disdain? Very well, Madam, learn then what the fear of alarming you had forced me to conceal. I deserve your respect, I repeat it, your cousin, the son of Count d'Estelan, the nephew of your mother, was not born to bear your contempt. I care little about those instruments by which you have possession of my property; they will be annulled, at my pleasure. I disprove the facts on which they were grounded, I shew that my father had no right to disinherit me, that his will was illegal, that the disinherison was void, as the faults charged against me were never committed. I have come to France for the express purpose of setting aside these degrading instruments; it shall be done. You, who have no answer for me, what have you to say to this, Madam?

Ala! nothing; this man was far from my thoughts; he had changed his name; I believed he was dead; the estate he demands to have restored I was going to give ..... Alas! I can think no more of marriage, no more of happiness; all is at an end..... Ah! why has Montalais refused Mademoiselle de Roye? Was it necessary he should give her up for my sake? Have I then deprived him of advantages..... I am in despair.

LETTER LVI.

SHALL I always be embarrassed, contradicted, distressed! They will not let me see the Count d'Estelan; they prevent me from writing to him, seek to learn the part I ought to take. One only appears to me to be proper; I wish to restore him all. My friends, particularly M. and Madame de Termes, oppose it strongly; they examine the business, consult upon it, give themselves a great deal of useless trouble. Assuredly I shall not contest a suit. Can I dispute with a son for the estate of his father, oppose his just rights? can I expose the reputation of my mother, see her memory, her integrity attacked in presumptuous libels, where the most horrid falsehoods are asserted with impunity, and injustice is upheld by prevarication and calumny? My mother would be accused of a base seduction, reproached with having dictated these writings, with having usurped an undue influence over the mind of a man overcome by grief and sickness. Did not Madame de Kerlanes intimate something to this effect? Did she not regard the will in my favor as having been obtained in this way?

Ah! then, my friend, our own reason, our hearts, are they not our first judges? Of what importance is the law, if conscience pronounce against it? should I now, accept the gifts of a man irritated against his son, should I lend my aid to his vengeance, and profit by the disposition of his wrath? no, without doubt. Why then should I refuse to M. d'Estelan the restitution which he demands? It is a deposit in my hands; how could I permit myself to detain it? But how unseasonably for me is it demanded!

Before the death of Madame de Montalais the return of M. d'Estelan would have given me no uneasiness. You know I disregard the vain splendor with which I am surrounded. I can content myself with mediocrity; I dare to think so, to hope that it

would not ſink me in my own view or that of my friends. But the moment, the diſpoſitions I was about to make, a gift ready to be ſigned ..... Ah! can one loſe, without diſtreſſing regret, the ſweet ſatisfaction of enriching the object of her love;

I am afflicted; I cry, and am inconſolable. I ſtill conceal this cruel event from M. de Montalais. It is neceſſary indeed to inform him. Oh! my dear Count, did I foreſee at his departure that I ſhould be any longer obliged to conclude my letters with a prayer for your *compassion!*

LETTER LVII.

From MADAME DE TERMES *to the Same.*

THE intereſt of Madame de Sancerre, all the happineſs of the reſt of our lives, abſolutely require, ſir, that you ſhould come to Paris. The reſolution ſhe wiſhes to adopt is very generous very noble without doubt; but circumſtances induce all her friends to diſapprove of it. If M. d'Eſtelan were poor, Madame de Sancerre might divide with him the eſtate of her uncle; ſhe might indeed renounce it to him; but it is a very rich man who would deſpoil her of a fortune of which he has not the ſmalleſt need. Madame de Thore, Madame de Comminges, Madame de Thianges have been to ſee him. M. de Termes, Count de Piennes have ſpoken to him on the ſubject ſeveral times; of all creatures in the world he is the moſt unreaſonable. Without the hand of his couſin, he will not liſten to any accomodation. *He has come to France for the express purpose of ſetting aside his father's will. It is not proper, he ſays, that a honeſt man ſhould have been diſinherited.*

such an act supposes a heavy fault in a son that has been thus deprived of his rights; he cannot suffer such false testimony to remain in force against him; it is degrading; he can disprove the whole, and procure himself to be restored to his honor and his rights. If his cousin will consent, he will recompense her by the gift of himself in marriage, otherwise he will apply to the laws; to these he must apply.

The moſt exact probity permits Madame de Sancerre to avail herſelf of a juſt defence; the laws authoriſe her to ſupport the will of her uncle; no patrimony is in queſtion; the eſtate, they ſay, was an acquiſition of the teſtator. The letter of M. d'Eſtelan to his father, proves his flight and the undutiful, revolting circumſtances attending it.

Your influence on the mind of Madame de Sancerre can alone reconcile her to a conteſt, the very idea of which ſhe now rejects; luckily M. de Montalais is abſent; ardent in his love, naturally diſintereſted, impatient at every obſtruction to his happineſs, he would be very apt to think as ſhe does; content with poſſeſſing her heart, obtaining her hand, he would not heſitate to return to his eſtate in the country with his charming companion; we who ſhould loſe her would omit no exertions to ſecure to her her fortune, and fix her at Paris.

Come, ſir, we entreat you, immediately; you owe this proof of zeal and attachment to Madame de Sancerre, to me, to all who compoſe the ſociety whoſe affection for her is ſo well known to you.

LETTER LVIII.

THE tender inquietude of Madame de Termes, her warmth, the ſtep which ſhe has juſt

hazarded, oblige me to diſpatch a letter ſix hours after hers, to entreat you, my dear Count, not to come; this journey would derange your affairs and be productive of little good; I have ſeen M. d'Eſtelan. I ſhall ſee him perhaps again. What a man! he is a ſtranger to the world, its cuſtoms, its manners, to reaſon, to politeneſs, to every thing proper or agreeable. He talks inceſſantly, exclaims, raiſes his voice to the higheſt animation, liſtens to nothing, comprehends nothing, follows his own idea, and at laſt knows not what he has ſaid or wiſhes. Inconſequence and contradiction form the chief of his character. Paſſionate, turbulent, headſtrong, never wicked, always inſupportable, noble enough, ſufficiently compaſſionate, liberal, even generous; this is a being quite new to me. Adieu; I ſhall ſoon write you further.

LETTER LIX.

I HAVE juſt received a letter from the Marquis de Montalais. Ah! how it afflicts me! he is yet ignorant of the diſtreſs I am made to ſuffer; he is indulging the fondeſt hopes; he ſpeaks of engagements ..... What! muſt I renounce him? Since the avowal of his ſentiments, of mine, my love has acquired new force. Oh! my friend, what attractions, what charms in love that is acknowledged, returned, in mutual wiſhes, a ſingle will! After having felt the tender paſſion under ſo many painful reſtraints, after theſe were removed and the full tide of pleaſure was flowing into my heart, was it neceſſary that new difficulties ſhould occur to prevent the conſummation of our happineſs? Alas! how can I wiſh to aſſociate the Marquis to my ruined fortune? ....But nothing is yet decided.

I was going to admit M. d'Eſtelan to ſee me on Tueſday laſt; Madame de Termes entreated him on my behalf to defer his viſit till Thurſday; to be more ſure, ſhe obliged me to accompany her to my ſiſter's at Neuilli. The firſt perſon I ſaw there was the Count d' Eſtelan; as ſoon as he obſerved me, he roſe up with precipitation, upſet the chair in which he was ſitting, rudely puſhed every one in his way, and croſſed the parlour to meet me, exclaiming *it is she; here she is; oh! here she is; it is she....* then calling my ſiſter in the whole extent of his voice: *here, dear Madam, come quick; speak to her; you have promised me to speak to her; advise her to love me, to marry me; she shall be happy; never shall she be sorry; no, never.* In ſpeaking he ſeiſed my hand, my robe, wiſhed to lead me towards my ſiſter; my fan fell; he haſtily ſtooped down, took it up, kiſſed it, broke it, thought himſelf alone in the midſt of twenty perſons and never once imagined how much ſurpriſe he was giving to all around.

I entreated Madame de Thore to ſtep into her apartment; I went into it with her, and the ridiculous fellow who ſtill held me. My dear Couſin, I ſaid, our affairs are eaſily ſettled. We ſhall have no law ſuit. ..... *So much the better*, he interrupted, *when we are of the same mind, every thing will be settled. You appear to me mild and reasonable. This is charming. Parbleu! you are a fine woman! you were only a little out of the way in not being willing to see me, to speak to me; but in faith you are perfect! you consent then...* Yes, Sir, I replied, I acknowledge your rights and will not conteſt them; your demand is juſt and to morrow, if you deſire, my ſteward.... *Your steward? We want not his interference; if you find my demand just, consent to marry me, and all will be settled.*

Separate the two objects, Sir, which you confound; the ſubject of your claim is the eſtate of my uncle, and I do not pretend to hear you on any other.

No? I absolutely refuse to hear you speak of that cursed estate. Do I ask for estate, riches? Is it not you alone I wish? I would destroy an instrument which attacks my honor; If the will does not relate to this, let it stand. But if you give yourself to me, you shall lose nothing; I will bestow upon you the greatest advantages; If you do not pretend to hear me on this ſubject, *no accommodation, Madam, not a word, no steward; my attornies will speak to you; yes; parbleu, a suit at law shall be brought and then .....*Ah! for what will you bring a suit, when I diſpute nothing? *Hear her, she will make me a fool! Madam, I deal plainly, I am honest, candid. Listen to this. I have a right to my father's estate, you agree to it, very seasonably. You are willing to give it up; this will not do; I must be restored to my rights by a formal decree. Now, hear me, if you will accept my heart and my fortune, I will try to reconcile all——if you will not, I repeat it, I shall listen to nothing; you shall be proſecuted to-morrow; you cannot complain, since you force me to diſtreſs you.*

Ah! you do indeed diſtreſs me more than you imagine! Your return has deſtroyed all the happineſs I had promiſed myſelf, all the ſatisfaction of my life. He looked at me ſteadily, and ſeemed loſt for a moment in deep thought. *You are attached then to your fortune, and are willing to do nothing to preſerve it! Of what conſequence is the eſtate of my father? I will ſettle my own upon you, if you deſire it. Oh! my dear, my beautiful couſin, behold me at your feet, do not reproach me with having diſtreſſed you; I offer to be your friend, your lover, your huſband. Could I offer more? You turn away your head, you tear my heart. Do love me, make an effort to do ſo; they ſay you are good; to what devil is it then? Are we not related? Is it a ſtranger who ſeeks you? Speak then, anſwer, will you love me? will you marry me?* I ſhould be ſorry to give you a ſingle hope which might deceive you.

No, ſir, no; it is repugnant to every diſpoſition of my heart; I can never be yours.

It would be impoſſible to paint to you his impatience, his cries, his reproaches to my ſiſter for her ſilence, his complaints of my *cruelty*, my *obſtinacy*; exhausted and out of breath, he went away abruptly, and this morning I received a ſummons at his inſtance.

My friends inſiſt upon my making a defence; I cannot determine to do so. My embarraſſment at this affair increaſes; he believes his honor concerned in formally annulling the diſinheriſon, unluckily referred to in the will; which, from this circumſtance, he alſo attacks, notwithſtanding the property, he ſays, is not of the ſmalleſt conſequence to him. I have written to M. de Montalais, informing him of every thing which has happened. I wait his anſwer: It ſhall regulate my conduct.

LETTER LX.

I HAVE juſt received a letter from M. de Montalais; I would ſend it to you, if I could deprive myſelf of the pleaſure of reading it again or if I had time to copy it; but I have ſcarcely time to write to you.

How much tenderneſs does his letter expreſs! It ſhows the nobleneſs of his ſoul, ſo truly great, ſuperior! Ah! my dear Count, is ſo diſintereſted, ſo delicate a paſſion deſtined to be forever unfortunate, to afflict my heart with an ever painful, everlaſting regret?

The Marquis thinks preciſely as I do reſpecting the rights of the Count d'Eſtelan: the loſs or gain of the ſuit is quite indifferent to him. He is aſto-

niſhed at the crazineſs of my kinſman, and does not conceive how he can refuſe the reſtitution which is offered; the point of honor at which he reſts appears to him perfectly frivolous, as M. d'Eſtelan will reſide by his own choice at a diſtance from us of three thouſand leagues.

He does not think that this affair ſhould retard our union; we ſhall be rich and happy, he ſays, if I conſent to leave Paris and paſs my days with him in an agreeable and quiet retreat. How intereſtingly does he paint the pleaſures of a ſimple life, uniform and peaceful; the endearing delights of uninterrupted harmony, ſecured by mutual eſteem, friendſhip, love! He preſents to my view all thoſe pure, tranquil and real enjoyments, the abundant ſource of which nature has kindly placed within ourſelves; precious enjoyments, which true philoſophy teaches us to value, infinitely beyond the vanities of a deluſive, myſterious world! But, my dear friend, to taſte them, to reliſh them, it is neceſſary we ſhould be always ſenſible of their importance, of the preference they claim; it is neceſſary that we ſhould be able to fix the wandering mind, the thought ever running from object to object; it is neceſſary to conquer that natural inconſtancy, the ſource of wearineſs and inquietude, by which pleaſure is made to ſpread its light wings and happineſs to fly.

If I were to liſten to my heart, yield to the wiſhes of my lover, to my own, would I have nothing to fear from time, from reflection? Muſt this man ſo diſtinguiſhed among his equals be made to retire within the depth of a remote province, to live there forgotten? A noble ambition has induced him to prepare himſelf for the moſt important offices, he has cheriſhed the well founded hope of arriving at the firſt honors; his birth, his merit ſmooth the path to preferment; ſhall I turn him from it, ſhall I arreſt him in his proſperous courſe? Is it at thirty that a man

can expect to fortify himself against regret, a cruel poison which rankles most in solitude?

The Marquis de Montalais has a generous heart; he will not remind me of his sacrifices; but I fear he will feel them; the smallest cloud which may overshadow his brow will make me apprehend his secret repentance; I may see him sad, and shall accuse myself of having rendered him unhappy ..... Ah! if I lose the power of conferring advantages upon him, I cannot be his ..... What! renounce M. de Montalais! Can I think it——write it....? Oh, no.

Piennes interrupts me, he comes with two attornies; I am tired, distressed with consultations; Madame de Martigues also gives me great uneasiness; she declares, protests that she will not marry if I lose my suit. She will live with me, as I do, and with me will she share every thing; this throws the Count de Piennes again into despair. The tender sentiments of my friend inspires me with the liveliest gratitude. But her resolution afflicts me. My God, is it not enough to be distressed, mortified, anxious for my fortune; is it necessary, to render my situation more sorrowful, that the happiness of my friends should be disturbed! Adieu.

LETTER LXI.

OH! I shall lose my patience; seriously I fear it; the strange being will hear no reason. After several interviews, ten letters, twenty quarrels, the useless negotiation of all my friends, a suit appears inevitable. Summoned to render, I am going to summon him to receive. Upon his refusal, I shall answer; we shall be involved in a tedious process, and when the unfortunate affair will be brought to an end, no one knows.

M. de Montalais is near Paris, he is coming, I expect him every moment .... Ah! how his return alarms me! If this cousin of mine should learn our engagements, if he should dare .... he is so impatient, so rash! If the Marquis indignant at a rival ... My friend, I foresee a thousand evils more afflicting than my ruin.

I have written this morning to M. d'Estelan; I know very little of the laws, but I seek continually the means of accommodation. I propose them to him, but I fear without effect .... His answer is brought— All hope is not lost; see.

The letter of COUNT D'ESTELAN.

You seem quite contented Madam; you make it an easy affair; I am treating with a finer sort of folks, tedious praters, humdrums ..... they talk of years! By their account a long time indeed is necessary to settle a question which a child might decide immediately.

I am sick; the air of this country does not agree with me; I am tired, vexed; you will make me die, and yet you say I distress you. *After all, of what do you complain? I love you; all my wrongs are with you. In a moment will I surrender myself to your orders; I will not listen to your proposals; but I desire to satisfy you. If you were willing, it would be easy to determine ..... For a woman that is called mild, you are in truth very obstinate.*

I know not, my friend, but I am in a terrible agitation. This note .... I will however hope .... He is tired, he says; Ah! so much the better. If a desire to leave the country should also get possession of him ..... Some one is coming .... it is he.

Nine o'clock.

All is in despair! Madame de Martigues ....., the imprudent woman! why should she have come in at a moment when the man was softening into

conceſſions ..... How her indiſcretion has expoſed me! he knows that I love; he is furious! all is loſt ..... And M. de Montalais has returned; ſhould they ſee each other, ſhould they meet ..... Oh! the cruel Madame de Martigues!

M. d'Eſtelan came in, ſeated himſelf, and was ſilent; he appeared heavy, tired, vexed. By my order, Raimond preſented him with a ſtatement of the effects which compoſed the fortune of his father, and a detail of the uſe they had been put to after his death. *Take away your papers*, he ſaid, *I have seen enough these two days past. Confound your laws and those who obscure rather than explain them; curse the estate; I wish it was at the bottom of the sea.* Raimond withdrew.

I began to ſpeak with mildneſs, with friendſhip. M. d'Eſtelan interrupted me, but not in his uſual ill humor. *You are an enchantress*, ſaid he, *you overcome me: in spite of your hardness to me, I cannot hate you. Yet you make me miserable. Why did I come here? Why have I seen you? I was so contented, so happy! Always ready to laugh, every thing amused me. Now, see me sad and heartless ..... I would not treat one of my slaves, with the inhumanity my nearest relation shows to me. And for what reason can it be? I offer her my heart, my estate, myself; I renounce all for her! But she does not love me; she will never love me; without emotion, without the least concern, she will doom me to die*, becauſe the diſpoſitions of her heart ..... *Ah! patience!*

He wept, and could ſay no more; his tears, his ſighs affected me. I judged of his regrets by my own. It ſeemed to me that the violence of his character, the natural impetuoſity of his temper, the novelty of control, made him ſuffer the moſt ſenſible diſtreſs. Our compaſſion for the pain we occa-

sion is easily excited; the tear was starting from my eye, I wished to speak; I could not.

M. d'Estelan observed how much I was affected; his heart was deeply touched; he rose up in the greatest agitation, and seemed to have lost his senses; he walked across the room in hasty strides. *Well, go on,* he repeated, *afflict yourself, weep to think you have compleated my despair. I wish the sea had swallowed me up.*

I entreated him to be calm, to sit down, and listen to what I would say. I extended my hand towards him; my Cousin, I said, I am very far from hating you; your persisting in your strange wish to marry me alone opposes the friendship I should be pleased to shew you. Give up this design; suppress so vain a wish. Do not cruelly torment a woman ..... *I torment you, I,* he exclaimed with warmth, *and cruelly too; I will not suffer it. I am good, complaisant, kind; I have even mildness when I am not crossed ..... I torment you; parbleu! it must be a woman that says this;* and without giving me time to answer him, *Madam,* he continued, *let us endeavour to be reconciled; let us torment each other no more; if the half of my fortune does not suffice you, I will assure to you the whole; you shall dispose of all my estate, of my will, of me .... Is it enough? do you hear me? will you answer? Ah! speak, say then! do you accept?* then pacing the room again, his face covered whth his hands, *she will not speak,* he cried, *she will not speak; she will weep all day, and then say I distress her.*

Approaching me again, he threw himself at my feet, cried, entreated; *my beautiful, my charming cousin, say only that you have some friendship for a relation who adores you: say that you would love me if you could; I will do every thing you demand; I will abandon the suit, the estate; I will give up my pride, renounce every thing to oblige you. Speak, give me your commands;*

it is your heart I wish and not the estate; give me the smallest mark of your regard, your friendship ..... Charmed at seeing him pacified, I was going to profit by this lucky moment, when the door flew open, and Madame de Martigues came in. - Ah! said she, Is it settled? Does he listen to reason? Have you finished the affair? When does he go?

And for what, Madam, do you interfere, he demanded, *what is it you would do?* Permit me to tell you, Sir, continued she, that it is quite enough to ruin the lady, not to tire her, fatigue her to death with your ill discourse, your savage love; a fine passion truly and it well becomes you! But, in good earnest, do you think it possible for her to love you? Even if Madame de Sancerre were not engaged by her promises, by her sentiments, to a better man ..... *What! engaged*, he exclaimed, *by her promises! What would she say? Madame de Sancerre engaged! Is she married?* Indeed, Sir, let me ask you, she replied with quickness, cannot this be without your consent? It would seem that you think she must wait your disposal! But I have engaged her; let me tell you, Sir, she is engaged. *She?* She; have I not told you; you may believe it at your leisure.

I cannot give you an idea of the transports, the anger, the fury of M. d'Estelan. He was enraged at Madame de Martigues; she ridiculed him, teased him, tormented him. In vain did I urge her to be silent; I could not repress the vivacity of the one, nor moderate the rage of the other; they lavished upon each other the most affronting epithets; the Count went away threatening, swearing, crying, choaking. Madame de Martigues remained triumphant, delighted with having driven him off, convinced that she had done very well to tell him every thing; she could not be persuaded that she had thrown me again into the embarrassment from which I was on the point of being luckily relieved.

Ah! my God! what have I now to expect? M. de Montalais will be here immediately ..... My revolted cousin, frantic with rage and jealousy .... my sad fears overcome me. Heaven avert the evil ..... And it is my friend, it is Madame de Martigues who has this moment plunged me into despair. Adieu. Pity me; I have again to ask your consolations. Alas! must I always ask them?

LETTER LXII.

AH! quickly, quickly let me tell you..... I dispatch an express ..... I wish he had wings. Have I indeed my reason? Am I awake? Is M. de Montalais here? Ah! yes, he is here; he is now chatting, laughing with Madame de Martigues..... How happy is he! how charmed am I! ..... M. d'Estelan, my poor Cousin! I pity him, I wish his welfare ..... Ah! I did not expect it ..... But I must compose myself! .... I cannot; my heart is full of the sweetest emotions .... I must tell you ... Hear me, my dear Count, hear me.

This morning at eleven o'clock, while I was alone in my chamber, weeping without restraint, indulging the most gloomy apprehensions, a letter was brought me from the Count d'Estelan. I opened it with trembling hand; I read it; I thought I was deluded. Judge of my surprise, of the revolution in my mind his expressions excited. Read his letter and partake of the pleasure which gladdens my heart.

The letter of COUNT D'ESTELAN.

Your friend is very impertinent; this is not your fault. You are engaged .... Heaven grant me moderation, patience, I have great need of it. If I were to follow the bent of my inclination ..... but for once in

my life I will restrain myself. She is very impudent, very wicked, your friend; you are very good, yourself, complaisant, mild, gracious, even in refusing. You are my relation; it is not for me to afflict you. Your complaints, if ever you have occasion to make any, must be reserved for another ..... but this is not material, I cannot find it in my heart to be willing to distress you. I shall depart without delay. If I were to remain here, I could not refrain from quarrelling with your lover, or your husband; I know not which he may be; I am contented to be ignorant of it. I must depart. If I were to kill this man, you would not love me the more; if he should kill me! .... Ah! I go immediately. Your pert, conceited friend may say what she pleases; this moment do I leave you all. Adieu, Madam; adieu my charming, my amiable, my very amiable cousin. If I ever cease to love you too much, I will return with the hope of being your friend. Yes, you are an adorable woman; but this vixen, this fury, this friend of yours, I hate her with all my heart.

Deign to accept a trifling proof of my affection. So near a relation may offer you these trifles. My God! is another dear to you? They said you were so indifferent .... I cherished a hope .... But let me speak no more of it. I may well fear, indeed, that I can never forget you. Adieu, Madam, adieu, my lovely cousin; upon my word, my heart is broken. ..... I leave you: I shall never see you more. Oh! no, I shall never see you, for I shall always love you.

A casket of the nicest and most beautiful workmanship accompanied this letter; on opening it I found a formal renunciation of the estate of my uncle, two beautiful sets of diamonds, an assortment of the richest pearls, emeralds and valuable trinkets.

In looking at the Count d'Estelan's release of his claim, his present, his letter, I was fearful that a flattering illusion was deceiving me; is it true, I asked.

Madame de Termes, is it true that my ſenſes do not abuſe me? She ſent for the Count; he had ſet out the moment they brought his letter. They had but then come to aſſure me of it, when the marquis de Montalais entered. I ſprang to meet him; I threw myſelf into his arms, he preſſed me to his boſom. Ah! we ſhall be happy; we ſhall be happy, I cried, bathing his face with the tears which joy had cauſed to flow. Madame de Termes explained to him the ſubject of my tranſports, told him the event which had excited them. She loves me, he ſaid, in a tone of tender animation, ſhe loves me; ah! this aſſurance ſuffices for my happineſs. What are all the riches and honors of the world compared to the certainty of her love? See, my dear Count, how conſtant is my regard for you, how grateful I am for your friendſhip, when it is in the firſt moments of the return of a lover .... yes a *lover*, cheriſhed, adored, that I write to tell you .....

From MADAME DE MARTIGUES.

To tell you, what? She does not know, perhaps; ſhe is ſo inexpert in every thing! What would have become of her or her affairs, had I not interpoſed my aid, my contrivance? She might ſtill have been weeping, complaining of her lot, lifting up her fine eyes to heaven, nothing would have been arranged. In two words I have ſettled every thing, And now my expedients have ſucceeded ſo well, ſee M. and Mad. de Termes gravely examining them in the retroſpect; M. de Montalais and Madame de Sancerre cannot decide whether they were good or bad. Indeed no one here has common ſenſe. I ſee nothing rational in any but myſelf. Adieu. Ah! where is Piennes? Poor Count! he will ſoon be after me, on the wings of love no doubt. Well, very well; we wiſh you here to aſſiſt in celebrating ...., For my part, I care not whether you come this month

or the seats: the lovers however would stop the motion of time until your arrival.

*** *The correspondence is here finished, by the return of Count de Nance. He arrived at Paris, the day of the happy marriage of his friend, and was a witness, at the same time, to that of Madame de Martigues. Notwithstanding the difference of their characters, these two amiable women rendered their husbands equally happy.*

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